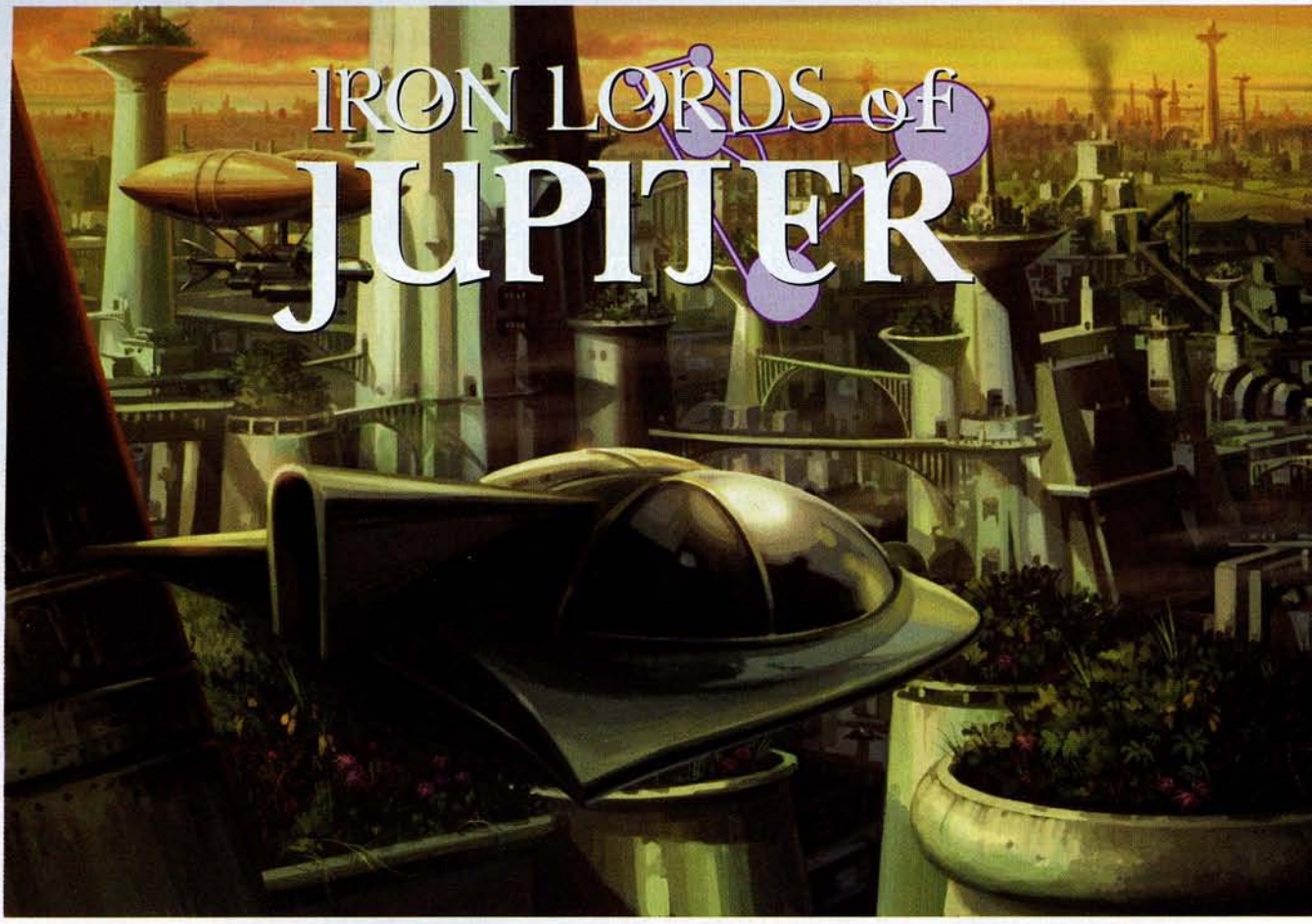

A POLYHEDRON MINI-GAME OF PLANETARY ROMANCE

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This POLYHEDRON d20 System Mini-Game requires the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* to play. POLYHEDRON Mini-Games adapt the standard D&D or d20 MODERN rules and conventions to nonstandard settings and genres. Unless specifically noted in the text, this Mini-Game follows the core *d20 MODERN* rules. If you know how to play *d20 MODERN*, you'll pick up the rules of this game in moments.

Iron Lords of Jupiter utilizes game mechanics developed for the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. and the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game by Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, and Charles Ryan.

This Wizards of the Coast game contains no Open Game Content.

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BASED ON THE ORIGINAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GAME BY GARY GYGAX AND DAVE ARNESON.

I: INTO THE JOVIAN MISTS

The crimson leaves above me rustled abruptly. A scarlet figure dropped down, slashing at me with a blade composed of some dark substance. Without thinking, I returned its attack with the utility knife I had been using on the binding straps, and was rewarded with a gout of azure blood. My attacker squealed and fled back into the scarlet canopy, and it was only a minute later that I realized: The creature had had four arms!

(Personal Journal of Alicia Vanderveck, July 7, 2092)

Introduction

Iron Lords of Jupiter is a d20 *MODERN* Mini-Game in the "planetary romance" tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Jack Vance, and Lin Carter. The game transports modern-day humans to a world of wild adventure, where heroes battle with a ray gun in one hand and a longsword in the other, where lost cities, ancient civilizations, miraculous technologies, and barbaric hordes all await those daring enough to seek them.

The Genre

The "planetary romance" genre began with Edgar Rice Burroughs and *A Princess of Mars*, published in 1912. This novel transported (by sheer willpower alone!) earthman John Carter to Mars, or "Barsoom," as the natives called it, where he embarked on a series of adventures which propelled him through twelve novels and which helped define a new genre of science fiction. The *Flash Gordon* comic strips and serials, the *Planet of Adventure* and *Big Planet* novel series by Jack Vance, the *Scorpio* series by Dick Akers, and the *Green Star* novels by Lin Carter all exemplify this genre. The key features of the genre are:

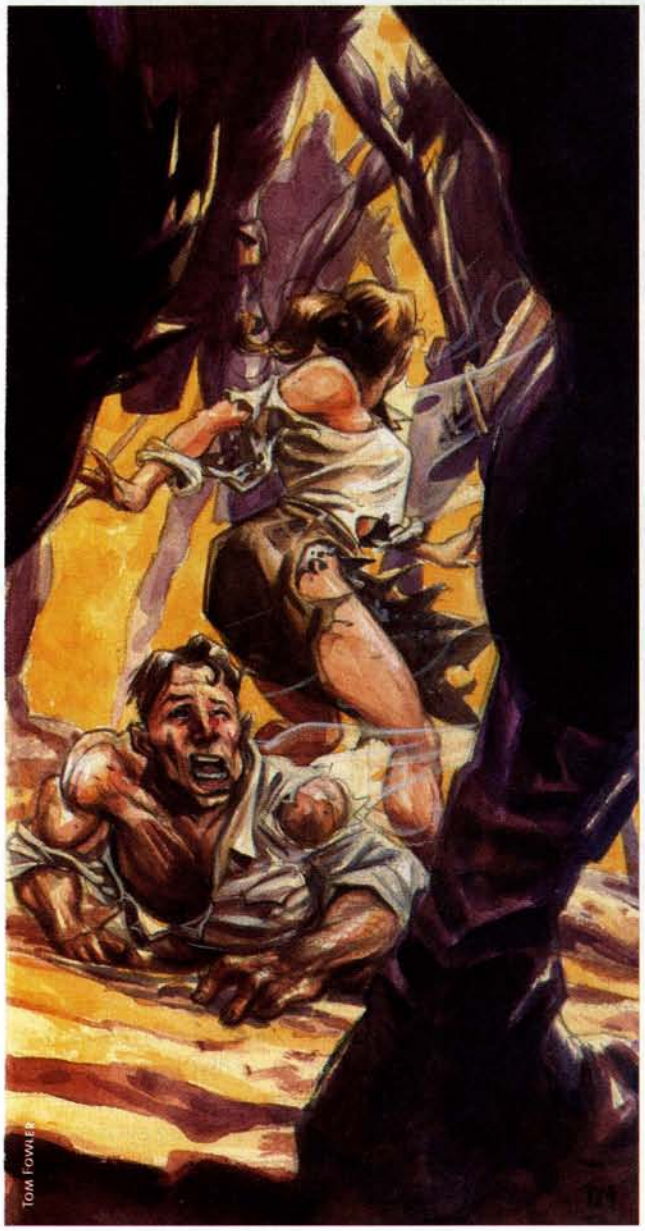
A strange world, seen through the eyes of a visitor from Earth. Almost all novels in the genre have, as their protagonist, an Earthman somehow transported to an alien world. "How" is utterly irrelevant; John Carter simply wished himself to Mars, and others have traveled via everything from rocketship to astral projection. Once there, though, the hero usually cannot return to Earth, and must learn all he can about the new world to carve out a place in it.

No magic. While psionic powers may exist, "magic" as such does not. Any phenomenon, no matter how outré, has some sort of "scientific" explanation (or, sometimes, no explanation at all—it simply is.)

Many races and cultures. Most works in the genre posit a world inhabited by a large number of races, both natives and travelers who came to the world in the distant past. Most are humanoid, albeit with some distinctive feature—red skin, four arms, or wings, for example. Others, especially "evil" races, often resemble classic "bug eyed monsters," usually combining the worst aspects of insects and squids. Most native societies are feudal in nature.

Lost and ancient. Most of the worlds featured in the genre are very old. Their glory days are long past; outside the few still-thriving cities are wastelands given over to bandits, roaming barbarians, and ruins. Even if the world is thriving, it is still old, and there is much buried, lost, and forgotten treasure waiting for an intrepid band of heroes to discover it.

Romance. It is almost inevitable; you arrive on an alien world, unarmed and naked, and the first thing you do is rescue an attractive member of the opposite sex from some slavering monster, thus establishing for yourself a lifetime career. While the traditional literature tended to feature male heroes perennially saving princesses from an endless series of threats, there is no need to enforce such gender stereotyping in a modern RPG; it is just as proper to have heroic female characters save handsome (but somewhat ineffectual) males as the reverse. Romance, it should be noted, is not sex—despite the near-nudity in which most characters cavort, any dalliances more explicit than a passionate kiss take place far off-stage.



The Setting

While the rules for *Iron Lords of Jupiter* are designed to be flexible enough to allow a Gamemaster to create any planetary romance setting he desires, a sample setting is included to serve as a both a model and as a viable setting for an entire campaign. It is Jupiter, of our solar system, but not the Jupiter scientists think they know. Beneath the roiling gas clouds of the upper atmosphere lies a vast world of oceans and forests, glaciers, and deserts, peopled by exotic races and nightmarish beasts.

But it is a world almost without metals. Despite its massive size, the gravity is close to that of Earth, and a human can survive there unaided. Until recently, the folk of Jupiter made do with exotic woods and stones, building great cities and civilizations without the use of brass, copper, or iron.

A few centuries ago, however, a portentous event changed the world forever. A massive meteorite, possibly a captured moon or an asteroid wandering far off course, slammed into shores of the Cuthalik Ocean. The marikon who first came across it were, at the time, just one of countless races inhabiting the planet, but they saw in the gift from the sky unlimited possibilities. Armed with weapons of steel, they built an empire such as Jupiter had never seen. In two generations, they evolved from farmers and fisherfolk to become the masters of all they surveyed.

The great city of Kuldaar now sprawls along the shores of the Cuthalik Ocean, surrounding and protecting the mining pits where the metal wealth found nowhere else on Jupiter is extracted. From their towers, the Iron Lords look out on their great city, and down upon the servitor races which share it—the brutish groll, famed for great strength and little else, and the artistic veth, once masters of their own empire, now mere servants to another.

Flying craft dot the sky above Kuldaar, powered by gravity-defying *lunth* crystals. Small personal flyers flit here and there, while lumbering iron dreadnoughts, slow and implacable, patrol the skies as a permanent reminder of the might of the Grey Empire.

The horizon is distant, far more distant than it is on Earth, and the Grey Empire's power reaches to it and beyond—but even that vast expanse is just a tiny fraction of Jupiter. There are oceans which could drown the Earth, mountains a dozen miles tall, and forests so dense that no light ever reaches the ground.

Characters can join those few who dare to rebel against the empire, defend cities against madmen and monsters, explore the dark understreets of Kuldaar or battle exotic beasts in the arena, hijack a sky dreadnought and turn it against the palace of the emperor himself, or simply explore the world, treading diamond cliffs and fungal forests in search of glory, wealth, or just a way home.

All of this, and much more, awaits anyone daring enough to make the journey there, and to challenge *The Iron Lords of Jupiter!*

II: CHARACTERS

I had considered myself prepared for anything. I had one degree in Engineering and another in Astrophysics; I had completed my emergency medical training with honors; and I could disassemble and reassemble any one of Minerva's systems blindfolded, or so I liked to think. Yet, in the end, the reason I am alive today is that I allowed myself the indulgence of keeping up my hobby of fencing.

(Personal Journal of Alicia Vanderveck, Oct. 10, 2092)

Strangers

PCs in an *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaign come from one of two backgrounds. "Strangers" are (relatively) modern-day humans transported, somehow, to a fantastic world of terrible beauty and high adventure. "Natives" were born to the strange world, and may be from a variety of possible races. Classic planetary romance novels usually focus on a single Stranger, but the dynamics of a roleplaying game might work better with several Strangers, perhaps the crew of a crashed interstellar rocket.

A campaign can be equal parts Native and non-native, or can consist solely of a party of non-natives trying to make their way, perhaps with a single Native ally. Although a wholly Native or wholly Stranger party goes against the spirit of the genre, feel free to try it out if it sounds like it might be fun.

Create Strangers according to the standard *d20 Modern* rules with the exception of Wealth and Reputation (see below). Starting Stranger characters may choose from any *d20 Modern* basic class. Traditional planetary romance Strangers often have anachronistic skills that turn out to be surprisingly useful on an alien world. A Fast hero might have Archaic Weapons Proficiency to reflect time in a college fencing club, for instance, while a Strong hero's Handle Animal skill ranks might serve her well when she tries to ride the eight-legged vorts favored by the gentry of Salimar.

The Stranger's native era should influence the character's choice of skills and feats. Since the bulk of planetary romance source material comes from the early to mid-twentieth century, most Strangers come from that era. The sample setting included here involves characters leaving Earth in the mid-twenty-first century, but this can easily be changed.

Consider a group of Strangers from a range of eras. If earthlings come to the alien world via a dimensional rift (see "How Did the Stranger Arrive?" below), the time-space disturbance might pull characters from various times of Earth's history, depositing them in an alien world at approximately the same time. In this way, a Civil War army captain, a World War I flying ace, and a 1990s movie star might find themselves trapped together, cooperation their only hope of survival.

Wealth

The standard *d20 Modern* Wealth system remains intact in *Iron Lords of Jupiter*. The Wealth bonus for Strangers (as determined by starting occupation), however, is meaningless; John Carter never counted coins or worried about paying the rent. Stranger PCs arrive without access to credit cards or bank accounts, and any money they have on them will be of no real value. GMs can handle this in one of two ways:

- Allow the PCs to "regain" their Wealth bonus after they have earned a level on their new world, justifying this by saying the bonus reflects not just actual wealth, but the ability to earn and manage wealth. Thus, the Entrepreneur who finds himself on Jupiter has no access to his money on Earth, but his flare for knowing what to buy and what to sell serves him well in the marketplaces of Salimar. After he has spent some time learning the basics of Jovian society (reflected by gaining a level), he can acquire a pool of resources to draw upon.

- Eliminate the Wealth bonus due to occupation and grant some other compensating factor—an additional class skill or an additional skill point for each point of Wealth bonus lost.

Reputation

Generally speaking, Strangers arrive on their new world with no Reputation at all; in many cases, they may not even speak a local language! Thus, Reputation should be placed to 0. Any Reputation bonus earned from occupation may be recorded and used for interactions with others from Earth, if they happen to show up. Reputation earned on the new world is handled normally, and is very important to the genre.

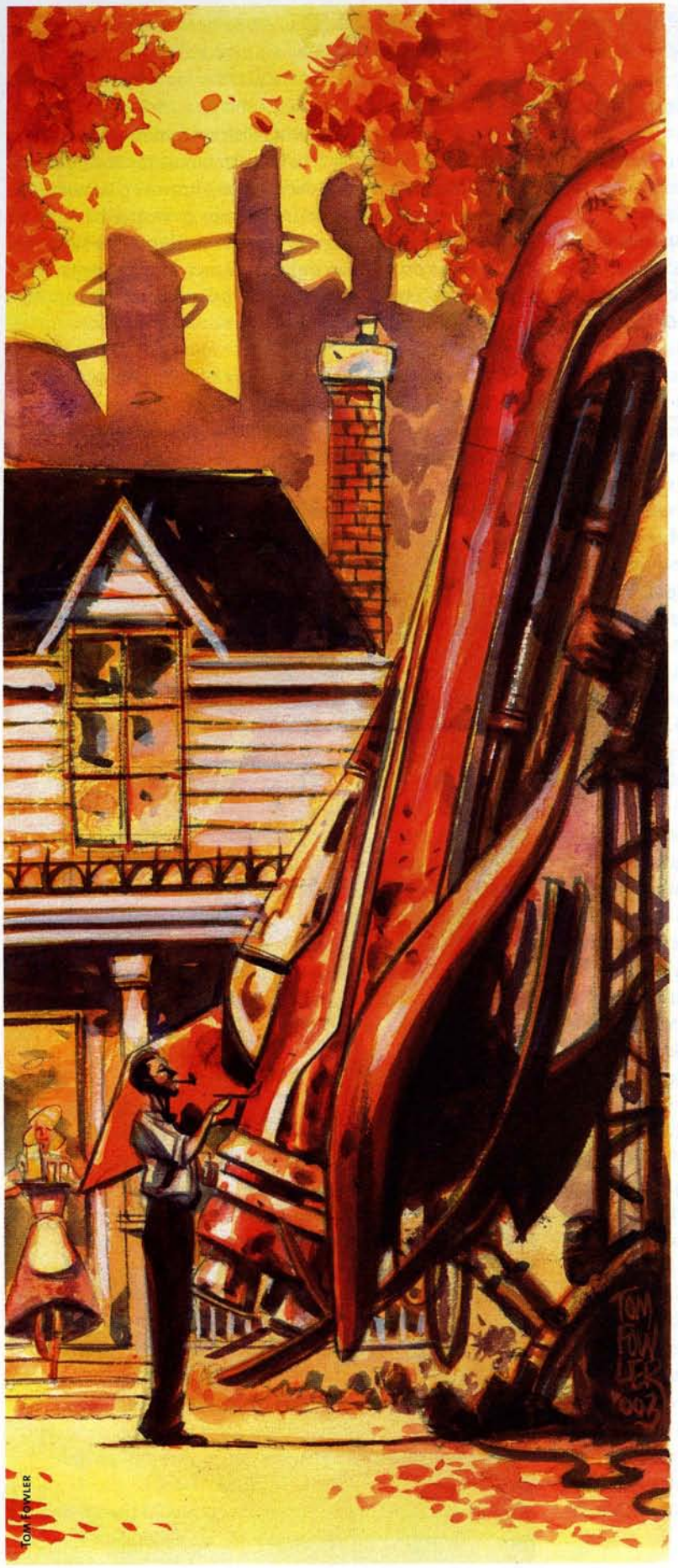
Reserved Skills

At the GM's discretion, Strangers may "reserve" up to one quarter of their starting skill points and one of their starting feats or talents to be taken later in play. This allows the PCs to, for example, learn the native language before gaining a level, or take a feat, such as Armor Proficiency, which they could not reasonably justify learning on Earth. Players may spend these "reserved" skill points or feats at any point prior to gaining second level. Undistributed skill points, feats, and talents not assigned immediately upon achievement of second level are lost forever.

How Did the Stranger Arrive?

Half the fun of setting up an *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaign is determing how the Strangers got to your campaign world. Some common means include:

Physical Transit: If your tastes skew toward the "realistic," the Strangers may have reached the alien world on a vessel



of some kind. They might be surviving crewmembers or shanghaied alien abductees who managed to survive a crash that killed their mysterious captors. If the Strangers come from the mid-twentieth century, they may have followed the "backyard rocket" tradition, entering space via a craft of their own design. Use a "radical" new propulsion system, an exotic fuel, or similar pseudoscience to justify the fantastic journey. If it was good enough for Flash Gordon, it's probably good enough for your player characters.

Dimensional Rift: Some exotic technology, either from Earth or another world, opens a "portal" between the worlds, and the Strangers pass through it. Someone at the "other end" may have deliberately opened the gateway to lure the PCs to their world, the Strangers may have entered intentionally, assuaging an explorer's spirit, or the whole thing may have been a terrible accident. The DC Comics character Adam Strange is a good example of a planetary romance character who comes to his world accidentally, zapped to the fantastic planet of Rann when struck by a random Zeta Beam.

It Just "Is": John Carter, the genre's most archtypal protagonist, simply looked at Mars, felt an odd attraction, and found himself standing on the Red Planet, naked. Lin Carter's *Green Star* protagonist uses astral projection to take over the body of a dead hero. If the GM wishes to toss out the "whys" and "wherefores," he can simply announce to the PCs that they find themselves on a new world. Ideally, there should be some triggering event—an explosion, a plane crash, a tornado—but ultimately, the end result is that the PCs arrive on the new world with no idea how they got there and must make quick decisions to stay alive in their new home.

Natives

Native PCs differ from the *d20 Modern* standard, in large part because their world is not modern, but a blend of the archaic and the futuristic. Modes of transit may include riding beasts and aerial ships, but generally won't include automobiles or skateboards.

Race: In the default *d20 Modern* setting, the only race available to PCs is "human." *Iron Lords of Jupiter* offers players of Native characters many additional race options, as detailed below.

Groll

Nasty, brutish, and not very short, most groll live as either barbarians or slaves. A few, however, have found other outlets for their talents. Spread across Jupiter, the groll inhabit a wide range of environments. In large numbers, they can be a threat to more sedate races, but for the most part they are content to wander and be left alone.

Personality: Groll are quick to anger and quick to forgive. They prefer the simplest things in life—a good fight, good drink, and the freedom of the open plains. They rarely forget a debt owed, either to them or by them. Their mercurial emotions cause others to consider them dangerous and unpredictable, but those who have studied their culture find their actions are guided by a deep and complex set of rules and traditions, which most folk simply don't bother to learn or understand. They aren't deep thinkers, but they're not stupid, and assuming otherwise is often the last mistake their enemies make.

Physical Description: Groll are roughly humanoid in form, but only roughly so, being taller and considerably broader than the average human. Their short, powerful arms end in two meaty fingers and a thumb, and their stubby legs bear two wide toes.

Groll skin tone is a uniform gray across the species, with dark brown patches providing color distinction between individuals.

A groll's most alien aspect, however, is its face, or lack thereof. Two wide, dull black vertically stacked glassy eyes stare ahead from their perch above a simple mouth, no more than a fleshy gap that can be opened to the size of a spacer's helmet or closed tightly into an almost invisible slit. Although groll lack even the vestigal ears of the veth, their senses are the equal of any human's.

Culture: Groll have a Barbarous culture. Most groll live a nomadic lifestyle, wandering the vast uninhabited regions of Jupiter, occasionally taking refuge for a few weeks at one of the countless abandoned cities that litter the giant planet.

While distinct groll bands number in the thousands, each with subtly different cultural variations, most follow a simple pattern of selecting a leader based on the virtue of pure might, who rules until someone else manages to defeat him in (usually) nonlethal combat. Control of a groll band might shift many times over the course of a few months.

The groll's nomadic lifestyle is incompatible with the strict control imposed by the Iron Lords, who nonetheless put the creatures' enormous strength to good use throughout the Grey Empire, where all groll are considered slaves. The marikon press groll into work gangs, force them to compete in gladiatorial conflicts, or use the creatures as personal servants. Escaped groll must either flee to the borderlands of the empire or take up a criminal lifestyle, often in the role of thug or enforcer.

Names: Groll have two names, a "secret" name they tell only to their closest friends and an "open" name, which is both descriptive and ever-changing. A groll might call himself "Morthag-Slayer" after he has killed such a beast. Some months later, he might rename himself "Fish-Finder" after locating a lake rich in food at a time when his tribe was hungry, then "Twin-Father" when his mate gives birth to twins.

A groll discovers his secret name, usually a short, simple sound that means both nothing and everything to him, in adolescence.

Typical Groll names (for both genders) include: Bone-Breaker, Finder-of-Trails, Knife-Crafter, Shaper-of-Stones, Son-of-River-Walker, and Leaping-Dancer.

Adventurers: Because of their large size and immense strength, many of Jupiter's inhabitants forget that the groll are as clever as any other race. Groll who break free from their bonds often work to free others, or seek ways to escape the domain of the Iron Lords and return to a nomadic lifestyle. Those few who learn to enjoy the comforts of civilization often seek employment as guards, soldiers, or laborers.

Groll Racial Traits

Groll are Native characters, and must obey all the rules regarding Native PCs.

Size: Medium. Groll have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, –2 Dexterity, –2 Charisma. Groll are heavily muscled and hardy, but slow-moving, clumsy, and have difficulty relating to others.

Base Speed: 20 ft.

Nonhuman: Groll receive one fewer feat at first level, four fewer skill points at first level, and 1 fewer skill point at second and higher levels.

Skills: All groll have Survival as a class skill.

Thick Skinned: Due to their hardy flesh, groll gain DR 1/–.

Hardy: Groll can survive in nearly any environment; they gain a +1 racial bonus on checks made to resist normal environmental effects such as natural heat and cold (but not fire- or cold-based attacks).

Marikon (Iron Lords)

Shifting from a race of relatively peaceful fishers and artisans to the masters of a vast empire in a few generations, the marikon (more commonly know as the Iron Lords of Jupiter) are the most prominent species in the region of the Eastern Cuthalik Ocean, which forms the geographic base of most *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaigns.

Personality: Most marikon, even those not of the ruling class, are arrogant and impatient. They believe they were given a destiny to rule Jupiter, and this belief colors everything they do. Even those few marikon who disagree with the policies of the Grey Empire tend toward imperiousness—if they join a group of rebels, they'll expect to be in charge. Almost every marikon seeks to assert rulership at some point—a building manager will bully the cleaner, the cleaner will bully his assistant, his assistant will bully a non-marikon slave. Every marikon is convinced of his own importance, and makes sure that others know of it.

Physcal Appearance: Marikon are humanoids, of average height and build. Their brilliant crimson skin secretes oils that give them a glistening sheen. A thin crest of dark black hair reaches from the bridge of a marikon's nose to the nape of its neck; the fringe itself is never more than an inch or two wide, but the hair can grow very long, and upper-class marikon spend a great deal of time shaping and decorating it. A skilled observer can tell the social status, political affiliations, and family members of a marikon just by studying the style and decorations of its hair.

The most striking difference between marikon and humans, however, are "outcroppings," distinctive spurs of bone that jut out at a marikon's elbows, shoulders, and knees. Marikon with a bent for combat further hone the naturally sharp bone; some marikon even fit special blades and points onto their outcroppings (see Chapter 4).

Marikon fingers and toes do not end in nails, but in similar bone spurs, which grow constantly and must be kept trimmed, usually by grinding them on sandstone blocks designed for just that purpose.

Marikon are mammals, and bear live young. They reproduce fairly slowly, having about one child every 2–3 years at the most. Twins are extremely rare—less than one birth in ten thousand—and triplets are things of legend. The average marikon female can produce 3–4 children in her lifetime.

Culture: Most marikon have a Civilized culture. For the marikon, everything changed when the sky fell. Long ago, a section of Jupiter's sky grew exceptionally bright. As pastoral marikon below watched, it glowed brighter and brighter, as if something were heating it. Then, a piece of it tore loose, with the rest of the sky healing around it. The piece of sky fell into the shores of the Cuthalik Ocean, and the marikon were the first to find and understand the sky fragments. They turned the orange rock into a grey metal. With that metal, they forged an empire.

The marikon became convinced they had a Destiny, that they were Chosen. After all, the surface of the world was so large that the odds of the Fallen Sky landing near them due to nothing but sheer chance were preposterously small, so the hand of some higher power must have guided it. The metals of the Fallen Sky were the key to empire, and so that must be the purpose of the marikon—to place the entire world under one rule, to bring order and peace to a factious Jupiter.

This sense of purpose has faded in the past generation. The larger the empire grew, the more slowly it expanded, and the markion's relatively slow breeding rate likewise hindered their expansion. Non-markion now nearly outnumber the Iron Lords in their capital city of Kuldaar, and this balance is likely to shift further against the markion in years to come. Many younger markion now press for holding and developing their present lands rather than imperial expansion. They disdain calls for service and wish to enjoy the empire built by their forefathers.

The Iron Lords prefer direct, functional art and engineering, eschewing fripperies or placing aesthetics above utility. Thus everything from their personal weapons to the great city of Kuldaar bespeaks a raw functionality; decorations and embellishments are rare.

Marikon prefer entertainment to art, favoring arena sports or plays (often violent dramas or low comedies). Marikon love to dance, funneling most of their creative energy into elaborately choreographed movements. Dance serves as the focal point of many social events, and the marikon martial arts are often known as war dances.

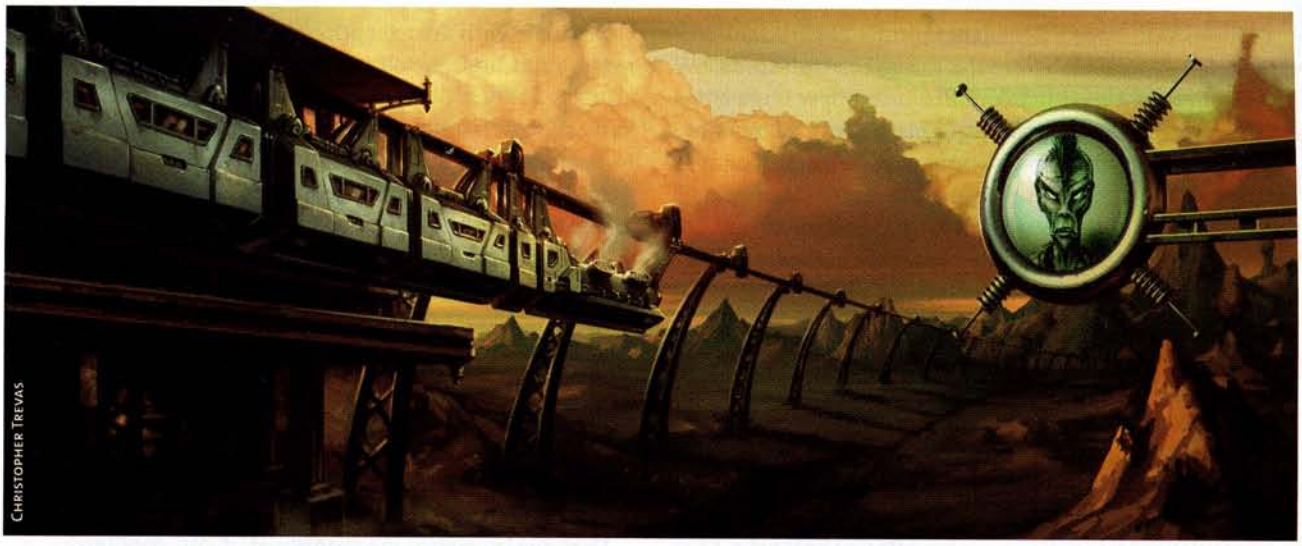
The marikon emperor putatively governs the whole of the empire, with day-to-day business carried out by a cadre of marikon known as the Seated Lords. In reality, the Seated Lords wield all real power; the emperor is a figurehead ruler kept rich and pampered, allowed to indulge all manner of personal whims, provided they don't interfere with the business of running the empire. It has been thus for many generations, so Kuldaar is filled with odd buildings and architctural features that were the result of Imperial Decree, and unusual laws and edicts litter the Scrolls of Order.

The current emperor is Overlord Joliz the Third, sometimes quietly called Overlord Joliz the Vain. The Seated Lords eagerly support his love of his own image and his

Determining Height and Weight

Choose your character's height and weight or roll randomly on the table below. The dice roll given in the Height Modifier column determines the character's extra height beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the dice roll given in the Weight Modifier column determines the character's extra weight beyond the base weight.

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Human, man	4'10"	+2d10	120 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Human, woman	4'5"	+2d10	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Groll, man	5'	+2d10	200 lb.	× (3d4) lb.
Groll, woman	5'	+2d10	400 lb.	× (3d4) lb.
Marikon, man	4'10"	+2d10	120 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Marikon, woman	4'5"	+2d10	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Veth, man	5'	+2d10	100	× (1d4) lb.
Veth, woman	4'8"	+2d10	70	× (1d4) lb.



demands that artists of all races from around the empire depict him, because his younger brother, Second Heir Mordal, is a much wiser and far more ambitious man. Should Mordal ascend to the Grey Throne, the long "understanding" of the true nature of power in the empire may change.

Names: Marikon prefer names that reveal who they are and why they should be listened to, combined with a family name that bespeaks their heritage.

Typical marikon names (males and females share naming conventions) are First Overseer Torgan, Commander of the Sixth Legion Merik, Assistant Tile Cleanser Dormag, and Third-Rank Weaponcrafter Grandar.

Adventurers: Marikon may become adventurers for many reasons. Some disagree with the actions of the Grey Empire and secretly work to bring it down. Others seek wealth, power, and status beyond the rigid bounds of imperial law. Others are criminals fleeing punishment; their crimes might be cruel and vicious, or they might be "crimes" only in the eyes of the empire—aiding a slave who was being beaten, for example, or loudly decrying imperial policy.

In the sample setting, marikon are intended primarily as antagonists. If marikon are to be used as PCs, it is recommended that there be no more than one per party, and that the character be a rebel or an outlaw.

Marikon Racial Traits

Marikon are Natives, and must obey all rules regarding Native PCs.

Size: Medium. Marikon have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Charisma, –2 Wisdom. Marikon are filled with the self-confidence that comes from knowing from birth that their species is master of all it surveys. Unfortunately, this also makes them overconfident and unperceptive.

Base Speed: 30 feet.

Nonhuman: Marikon receive one fewer feet at first level, four fewer skill points at first level, and 1 fewer skill point at second and higher levels.

Bonus Feat: All marikon gain the Metalworking feat at first level.

Outcroppings: Marikon have bony spurs on their elbow joints and bone "claws" on their hands, allowing them to deal normal (instead of subdual) damage in melee combat.

Wealth Bonus: +1. The relatively small marikon population has control over the wealth of a great empire.

Veth

The veth are a humanoid race, very similar in appearance to terrestrial humans save for their blue skin and almost non-existent ears. The veth are one of many humanoid races who dwell in the area controlled by the Iron Lords; their peaceful, artistic civilization was absorbed into the Grey Empire with very little resistance, and theirs is considered one of the least threatening of the vassal states.

Personality: Veth are patient, sensitive, artistic, and refined—usually. An ancient race, they long ago managed to provide themselves with the necessities of life, leaving much time for contemplation. The takeover of their last great city, Salimar, by the empire has been met with mild confusion and distress by the elder veth, but seems to have kindled something in the younger ones, reigniting a fire which has been smoldering, almost extinguished, for many generations. Rebellion, both overt and subtle, has flared, and younger veth are becoming more inclined to fight than submit, more prone to action than to thought.

Physical Description: Veth skin ranges from pale to deep blue. Their metallic irises literally sparkle, ranging in hue from copper red to golden yellow. Veth hair ranges from dark black to pale blonde, following the usual range of human colors, but tends to begin much further back on the scalp than human hair does.

Veth have extremely underdeveloped ears, with just a slight fold of skin surrounding the ear passage. Generally much thinner than humans, veth weigh even less than their slight builds suggest.

Culture: Veth have a Decadent culture. Their large empire fell apart well before the rise of the Iron Lords, and their current territory contains only a few large cities and the surrounding farmland. Centuries-old biotechnology insures a rapidly-growing and pest-free crop, so most veth spend their considerable free time in the pursuit of art. Veth art is subtle, intricate, and, to most observers, dull; a typical veth may spend a year placing rocks into a pattern on a bed of sand. Those few who produce work with more visceral appeal are often transported to the marikon city of Kuldaar, where their work amuses the overlords of the Grey Empire.

Names: Veth names are soft and liquid. Most contain many levels of meaning, as determined by the choice of characters used to write them—the same syllables can mean radically different things when written down in the complex veth language, so it is often as important to understand how someone spells their name as how they pronounce it.

Typical male veth names are Ylmin, Lithin, Mellorin, Nalmalin, and Jylman.

Typical female veth names are Arlla, Ordral, Nallio, Athalli, and Nolli.

Adventurers: Most veth are languidly content, resigned to their position as thralls of the Iron Lords. A few, mostly the younger, are not. Some have learned of the ancient Veth Expanses, when the veth ruled great reaches of land, and seek to reclaim those glory days. Others have been inspired by the dynamism shown by the strange visitors from a distant world, and have found a purpose in life beyond delicate refinement.

White Veth: Perhaps one in one thousand veth is born an albino. Veth consider albinoism a mark of both distinction and fear, for white veth possess strange powers, though not all train fully in their use. The condition is not hereditary, but seems to be random; a white veth may be born to any veth family. Such children are usually kept hidden away—servants of the Grey Empire hunt out white veth, enslaving them for the amusement of the Iron Lords.

Veth Racial Traits

Veth are Natives, and must obey all rules regarding Native PCs.

Size: Medium. Veth have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Dexterity, –2 Strength. Veth are agile but fine-boned, and veth warriors prefer light weapons and armor, sacrificing power for mobility.

Base Speed: 30 feet.

Nonhuman: Veth receive one fewer feat at first level, four fewer skill points at first level, and 1 fewer skill point and second and higher levels.

Long-Lived: Veth live longer than humans; a veth is considered an adult at 25, and usually lives to be 150.

Skills: All veth have either Craft (visual art) or Perform as a class skill. Select one at character creation.

Defense: Veth are exceptionally agile, and receive a +1 racial bonus to Defense.

White Veth Racial Traits

As for veth, except as follows:

Ability Scores: –2 to Constitution. White veth are frail and often in ill health.

Bonus Feat: White veth gain the Wild Talent feat at first level.

Occupations and Societies

Very roughly, societies of an alien world can be divided into Civilized, Decadent, and Barbarous.

Civilized societies are those which dwell in actively maintained cities and continue to expand their knowledge and influence.

Decadent societies are composed of city-dwellers whose time has passed. Their great structures crumble under the slow assault of time, their knowledge fading with each generation. Most inhabitants of a Decadent society seek only to be left alone.

Barbarous societies consist of nomds, raiders, farmers, or scavengers who produce little, taking and finding what they need.

Certain starting occupations (*d20 Modern*, p. 32) make sense for some society types and not for others. Consult the following lists to determine available starting occupations for members of the three society types:

Civilized: Academic, adventurer, creative, criminal, entrepreneur, military, student, technician.

Decadent: Adventurer, athlete, creative, dilettante, law enforcement.

Barbaric: Adventurer, athlete, military, religious, rural.

Skills And Feats

Iron Lords of Jupiter uses the most of the skills presented in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Due to the bizarre nature of planetary romance worlds, and Jupiter in particular, a number of skills require additional rules or minor alterations, as explained below. Any unlisted skill can be used unchanged.

Computer Use

This skill does not exist in the sample setting. Other planetary romance settings might include "electric brains" or "calculatrons," which can be used with this skill. Such machines are generally bulky, centralized, and have anachronistic capabilities. Robots might exist in some planetary romance settings, but to be true to the source material such artificial men should possess awkward early sci-fi features such as telescoping arms and plenty of lightbulbs.

Craft

Use of Craft (electronic) is somewhat limited on Jupiter, as only the city of Kuldaar really has electronics. Even there, the technology incorporates materials and techniques which are unknown on Earth, and Strangers suffer a –2 competence penalty on Craft (electronic) checks until they have had enough experience with the equipment to compensate. Other Craft skills work as specified in *d20 Modern*, although the precise techniques used are different. A native PC with Craft (pharmaceutical), for example, knows how to blend native plants into potent medicines, while a character with Craft (chemical) has knowledge only of native poisons and explosives, which may differ considerably from their counterparts on Earth.

Characters in an *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaign have two additional Craft skill categories: Craft (crystal) and Craft (woodworking).

Since metal as a rule does not exist on Jupiter, Native characters suffer a –4 circumstance penalty to Craft checks related to metalworking.

Craft (crystal) (Int)

Exotic energy-emitting crystals power much of Jupiter's technology. Two of the most important crystals are the *lunth* and *kivas*.

Lunth crystals grant vehicles the power of flight. Carving and setting the the crystals into the settings required to take advantage of their power is a delicate art. Sample Craft DCs are:

Task	DC
Realign crystals	12
Carve small crystal	20
Carve medium crystal	25
Carve large crystal	30

Kivas crystals emit powerful and coherent bursts of force, and are the basis for Jovian "ray guns." Sample Craft DCs are:

Task	DC
Evaluate crystal	10
Set crystal	15
Carve crystal	20
Improve crystal	25*

*A *kivas* crystal can be altered to increase its utility as a weapon. Such alterations include: Increasing total charges by 1, increasing damage 1, and increasing range increment by 10 feet

Each such alteration increases the DC of further alterations by 5. Failure when altering a *kivas* crystal results in an explosion which does 4d6 points of damage to all within 10 feet (DC 25 Reflex save for half damage).

Craft (woodworking) (Int)

Woodworking on Jupiter is much more than a simple handicraft. Without much metal, weapons and tools must be shaped from *telgir*, a type of wood which hardens to an almost bronze-like consistency when suitably treated. Shaping and processing *telgir* is thus a vital skill.

Task	DC
Carve raw *telgir*	10
Harden *telgir*	15
Shape hardened *telgir*	20

Demolitions

Explosives generally play a minimal role in planetary romance source material, and hence should be extremely rare in an *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaign. If potent explosives (such as *jirathite*, p. 41) exist, so does this skill. Otherwise, feel free to ignore it. Even if the campaign setting features explosives, they generally are too primitive to be disarmed or timed more accurately than to within a minute.

Drive

Motor vehicles, as such, rarely exist in the genre; most land transit is by riding beast or flying vehicle. Thus, the Drive skill generally does not exist.

Investigate

Modern crime-solving techniques are generally not known to Natives.

Knowledge

Most Knowledge sub-categories presented in *d20 Modern* are appropriate, but focus on the lore of the campaign world rather than the lore of Earth. There's enough overlap that Knowledge skills acquired on Earth will not be penalized on an alien world, although the characters may need to overcome a few preconceptions.

"My biology classes had taught me that man-sized insects, such as the one which had just attacked me, simply could not exist. The bleeding gash in my arm offered a dissenting point of view. I chose to heed my arm."

(Personal Journal of Alicia Vanderveck, Aug 12, 2093)

Pilot

The version of this skill known to Natives applies to personal anti-gravity craft rather than fixed-wing aircraft.

Research

This skill is available only to native PCs from highly-civilized cultures which maintain repositories of knowledge. (See Occupations and Societies, above.)

Feats

Strangers follow the standard feat rules as outlined in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Some *d20 Modern* feats require additional rules or information when applied to a Native character, as outlined below. Unlisted feats remain unchanged.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency

Autofire weapons do not exist on Jupiter; this feat is unavailable to Native characters at character creation, and can be gained only if the character has been trained by a another character with the feat and the appropriate weaponry with which to demonstrate.

Aircraft Operation

Choose from the following aircraft classes: ornithopters, sky barges, and gliders.

Burst Fire

See Advanced Firearms Proficiency, above.

Double Tap

See Advanced Firearms Proficiency, above.

Exotic Firearms Proficiency

All of the ranged energy weapons noted in the Chapter Five are considered "exotic" in the sample setting. Each time a character selects this feat, he gains proficiency with one of them.

Force Stop

Since modern surface vehicles do not exist in the default setting, this feat is moot.

Gearhead

Jupiter has no computers, so this feat applies instead to Disable Device and Repair checks.

Personal Firearms Proficiency

All firearms (energy weapons) are considered exotic, and require Exotic Firearms Proficiency. This feat does not exist.

Optionally, A GM may allow it for characters whose background logically includes gun skill. If this is done, players with this proficiency should be allowed to bring an Earth-type gun with them. Providing a supply of bullets for said gun should be difficult.

Skip Shot

This feat works with energy weapons.

Strafe

This feat does not exist.

Surface Vehicle Operation

Sailboats and muscle-powered craft (rowboats, war galleys) are the only surface vehicles which exist on Jupiter. This feat has no prerequisite.

New Feats

This section introduces several new feats. Some apply only to the sample setting; others are of use in any example of the genre. Feats marked [Native] are available only to characters who are natives of the game world. Feats marked [Stranger] are available only to those not of the game world.

Away With You!

You can bypass lesser foes to attack a greater enemy.

Benefit: When in combat against several enemies, you may spend an action point and designate one foe as your "fitting opponent." If the enemies have multiple CRs, the fitting opponent must be the foe with the highest CR.

Only one foe per combat session may be so designated; if the fitting opponent is slain, you cannot use this feat again until the next combat. The feat may not be used more than once per day, in any event.

When used, you gain a +4 dodge bonus to Defense when avoiding attacks of opportunity caused by moving toward the fitting opponent. This bonus applies only if the character intends to engage said foe in melee combat. This is a highly cinematic feat, and may not be appropriate for darker games.

Exotic Technique [Stranger]

Your odd style with melee weapons confuses Native opponents.

Prerequisite: Archaic Weapons Proficiency.

Benefit: When in combat with a Native, you may spend an action point in an attempt to use Terran fighting styles to confuse an opponent trained in a different style. Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1–5, your style confuses your opponent, and you gain a +1 competence bonus to hit against that opponent for the duration of combat. On a roll of 6, however, your style proves inadequate to defend against the opponent's attacks, and you suffer a –2 penalty to Defense against that opponent for the duration of combat.

Special: This feat may be taken only at first level.

"His skill in the tuth-tal style of the veth was much greater than my own, and he quickly drove me back, toward the morthag pit. Then I realized that my months of training with the veth fighting masters had nearly caused me to overlook the obvious answer! I shifted to a classic fencing pose and parried his blow, then issued a riposte of my own. Startled, he drew back, and I moved away from the edge of the pit, a thin smile forming on my lips."

(Journal of Alicia Vanderveck, Sept 1, 2093)

Lover's Fury

You are especially deadly when someone you love is in danger.

Benefit: If you are in combat, and someone you love is clearly threatened (in a square which an enemy threatens, exposed to ranged weapons fire, at –1 or fewer hit

points, or the like), you gain a +1 morale bonus on all attack and damage rolls. However, you cannot withdraw from combat so long as your love is threatened. You may only have one "love" at a time, and the relationship must be approved by the GM.

Metalworking

You are trained in working metal.

Benefit: In the *Iron Lords of Jupiter* setting, metal is extremely rare, so that most craftsmen never learn to use it properly. With this feat, you may use your Craft skills without incurring a –4 penalty.

Special: This feat is intended only for the sample setting.

Strange Memories [Stranger]

You have odd flashes of knowledge about your new world.

Benefit: Despite having never been here before, you sometimes feel that this is your true home. Perhaps you lived here in a former life, or perhaps you have somehow been touched by this place. Whatever the cause, once per day, you may make a DC 12 Intelligence check to "remember" or "know" some useful fact about the world that you would otherwise not know (within reason).

For example, you might recognize that the writing on the wall of the ruined city indicates it was built by the Green Crawlers, but you would probably not know the layout of the Path Of Twelve Deaths which lies at the heart of that city.

Special: You may not Take 10 or 20 on this check. The memories are not under your control; they bubble up from your subconscious at random.

Tenuous Grip

You know how to avoid a nasty fall.

Benefit: If you fail a Jump check while leaping across a pit, or a Balance check while on a narrow precipice, are bull rushed over a cliff, or find yourself in any other situation where the consequences of a failed check would result in you taking falling damage, you may spend an action point to make a DC 15 Reflex save to grab hold of *something*—the edge of the pit, a jut of stone, the decorative rim of the air-car you were just shoved out of—and hang on. You can do nothing else while dangling except try to pull yourself up; this is a DC 15 Strength check if you have light or medium encumbrance, a DC 20 Strength check if you have heavy encumbrance. Failing the check means you hang there one more round (perhaps allowing an ally to help you up). Failing by more than ten means your grip slips and you plummet to certain doom.

Vehicle Leap

You are skilled at leaping from or onto a moving vehicle.

Benefit: By spending an action point, you may successfully jump from one moving vehicle to another, provided the target vehicle is within your jumping range. You also may jump from a stationary point onto a moving vehicle by spending an action point, but you must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid suffering damage. If you fail the save, you suffer damage as if you had been struck by the vehicle.

TOM FOWLER

III: CLASSES

The unusual setting of an *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaign requires certain adjustments to the advanced classes presented in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Unlisted advanced classes do not appear in a planetary romance campaign.

Note that bonus feats granted by advanced classes cannot grant feats that do not exist in the genre (see Chapter 2), even if those feats appear on the bonus feat list in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Soldier

The Soldier advanced class becomes the Warrior, making the following changes:

Requirements: Replace Personal Firearms Proficiency with Archaic Weapons Proficiency.

Class Skills: Demolitions is not a class skill.

Bonus Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency and Exotic Firearms Proficiency are of limited use in a world without firearms.

Martial Artist

This class may be used unmodified.

Daredevil

Modify this class as follows:

Class Skills: Replace Demolitions with Handle Animal.

Bonus Feats: Add Tenuous Grip and Vehicle Leap.

Bodyguard

Modify this class as follows:

Requirements: Replace Personal Firearms Proficiency with Archaic Weapons Proficiency.

Bonus Feats: Add Lover's Fury and Vehicle Leap.

Infiltrator

This class may be used unmodified.

New Advanced Classes

This section introduces new advanced classes suitable for any planetary romance campaign, including new twists on standard *d20 Modern* advanced classes like the Gunslinger, Field Medic, and Field Scientist.

Bowmaster

The Bowmaster rules ranged combat in an *Iron Lords of Jupiter* campaign. She can fire arrows with unearthly (or unjovian) speed, and excels at hitting her intended target. She can shoot through an inch-wide hole while riding past it on a fast vort, or pin an arrogant Iron Lord to the wall by his robes without shedding a drop of blood.

Select this advanced class if you wish to be expert in the use of the bow.

The fastest path to this class is from the Fast hero basic class.

Requirements

To qualify to become a bowmaster, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Balance 6 ranks, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks.

Feat: Archaic Weapons Proficiency.

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Table 3–1: The Bowmaster

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Close combat shot	+1	+0
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	Weapon focus	+1	+0
3	+2	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4	+3	+1	+2	+2	Double shot	+2	+1
5	+3	+1	+3	+3	Trick shot	+3	+1
6	+4	+2	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7	+5	+2	+4	+4	Sharp shooting	+4	+2
8	+6	+2	+4	+4	Greater weapon focus	+4	+2
9	+6	+3	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10	+7	+3	+5	+5	Bullseye	+5	+3

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Bowmaster advanced class.

Hit Die: d10.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: The Bowmaster's class skills are as follows: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (current events) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Bowmaster advanced class.

Close Combat Shot

At 1st level, a Bowmaster gains the ability to make a ranged attack with a bow while in a threatened area without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Weapon Focus

At 2nd level, a Bowmaster gains the benefits of the Weapon Focus feat with a specific type of bow (short bow, crossbow, etc.).

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Bowmaster may select a bonus feat from the following list. The Bowmaster must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Far Shot, Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Shot on the Run.

Double Shot

At 4th level, the Bowmaster may fire two arrows instead of one with each attack. This attack is at –4 to hit. If the Bowmaster has more than one attack, she may decide whether or not to make a double shot on an attack-by-attack basis. Only one roll is made for the double shot; either both arrows hit or both miss.

Trick Shot

Upon reaching 5th level, the Bowmaster has learned a number of techniques that allow her to make incredibly precise shots. Doing so requires an action point and a full round to aim. Typical trick shots include:

- Hitting a lever or a button with an arrow, activating it.
- Knocking a sword or gun out of someone's grip. Resolve the action as a normal disarm, except that it can be done at range and does not provoke an attack of opportunity (unless the Bowmaster is currently threatened in melee).
- Pinning someone's cloak to the floor, or their sleeve to a wall. (DC 5 Strength check to pull free.)

GMs should allow the trick shot to permit dramatic, and mood-fitting actions, but *not* to do any hit point damage—you cannot use a trick shot to place an arrow directly into the eye of a rampaging gorthog, for example.

Sharp-Shooting

At 7th level, a Bowmaster gains the ability to score hits that others would miss due to the target's cover.

If the Bowmaster uses a bow to attack a target, the cover bonus to the target's Defense for one-quarter, one-half, three-quarters, or nine-tenths cover is reduced by 2.

Greater Weapon Focus

At 8th level, the Bowmaster receives a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls made with the specific bow chosen for the Weapon Focus class ability. This bonus stacks with the bonus granted from Weapon Focus.

Bullseye

At 10th level, a Bowmaster becomes so adept at using the bow to which she has applied Weapon Focus that her attacks with that bow can deal extra damage. With a successful attack, before damage is rolled, she can spend 1 action point to deal +3d6 points of damage.

Engineer

Engineers master the practical application of technology. An engineer concerns himself not with collecting lore for its own sake, but with what he can do with that lore. He can re-align the *lunth* crystals of a sky dreadnought even as it plummets groundward. He can repair a lightning gun even as a hungry zorl bears down on him. And if he can tell what all those mysterious squiggles mean, he can jury-rig a First Empire mechanism lost for untold generations beneath the Spiked Desert.

Select this class if you want your character to create and repair technological gear.

The fastest path to this class is from the Smart hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To qualify to become an Engineer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Craft (crystal) 6 ranks, Disable Device 6 ranks, and either Craft (electronic) 6 ranks or Craft (mechanical) 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Engineer advanced class.

Hit Die: d6.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: The Engineer's class skills are as follows: Craft (crystal, electronic, mechanical) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (behavioral science, life science, physical science, technology) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language

(none), Repair (Int), Research (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Engineer advanced class.

Jury-rig

An Engineer gains a +2 competence bonus on Repair skill checks made to attempt temporary or jury-rigged repairs. See the Repair skill description (*d20 Modern*, p. 70) for details on jury-rigging.

At 7th level, this competence bonus increases to +4.

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Identify Device

Many of the mechanisms which exist on Jupiter (or on most planetary romance worlds) were made long ago by cultures which were not scrupulous in their documentation practices. As a result, a mechanism found in a ruined city or forgotten vault might well be incomprehensible at first glance. It could be a gun, a scanner, a flashlight, or a firestarter.

An engineer can figure out what the device is without breaking it or even having heard of it before. Given ten minutes to examine a wholly alien device, an Engineer can make a DC 20 Intelligence check, adding his Engineer class levels to the result. A successful check means the Engineer has identified the basic type of device (weapon, sensor, tool, etc) and at least one major function. A failed roll means the Engineer has no clue regarding the device, while a natural 1 means a dangerous misidentification has occurred. (GMs may wish to make this check in secret.)

A few moments later, Talveen smiled. "It's an optical enhancer of some sort!" he declared confidently. "You look through here, and you press this..."

Given that the rocky ground of the mountains surrounding the forgotten city was virtually impervious to digging tools, I suppose it was a small mercy that there was not enough left of Talveen to bury.

(Personal Journal of Alicia Vanderveck, August 12, 2095)

Tinkering

An Engineer of 2nd level or higher can perform miracles when it comes to getting more out a device than was originally intended. By spending 1 action point and making a relevant Craft check, the Engineer can temporarily improve a machine's performance—at the risk of causing the machine to need repairs later. The Craft check's DC depends upon the type of improvement being made, as shown on the table below.

Table 3–2: The Engineer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Jury-rig +2	+1	+0
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Identify device, Tinkering	+1	+0
3	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Unique creation	+2	+1
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mastercraft, Integrate tech	+3	+1
6	+3	+1	+1	+5	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Jury-rig +4	+4	+2
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Mastercraft	+4	+2
9	+4	+2	+2	+6	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Mastercraft	+5	+3

Improvement	Craft DC	Repair Chance (d%)
Ranged Weapons		
+1 to damage	15	01–25
+2 to damage	20	01–50
+3 to damage	25	01–75
+5 ft. to range increment	15	01–25
+10 ft. to range increment	25	01–50
Electronic Devices		
+1 equipment bonus	15	01–25
+2 equipment bonus	20	01–50
+3 equipment bonus	25	01–75
Vehicles		
+1 on initiative checks	20	01–25
+1 to maneuver	25	01–50
+2 to maneuver	30	01–75

The Engineer performs the tinkering in 1 hour. He can't take 10 or take 20 on this check. If the check succeeds, the effect of the improvement lasts for a number of minutes equal to his Engineer class level, beginning when the object is first put into use. The Engineer selects the single improvement he wants to make prior to making the check. After the duration of the effect ends, the machine reverts to its previous state and a repair chance percentile roll is made. The result of this roll indicates whether the machine requires repairs before it can be used again.

Bonus Feat

At 3rd level, and again at 6th and 9th, the Engineer gains a bonus feat from the following list. The Engineer must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Aircraft Operation, Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Meticulous, Renown, Studious, Vehicle Expert.

Unique Creation

At 4th level, the Engineer may create a new or highly modified weapon, tool, or vehicle which only he can use. This can best be simulated by using the Tinkering ability, but with no chance of a later breakdown. Furthermore, only the creator can use the device properly; anyone else will suffer a –4 non-proficiency penalty on the appropriate skill checks or attack rolls. An Engineer may have only one unique creation at a time, regardless of who is wielding it. Constructing a unique creation requires one week and the appropriate tools and resources.

Integrate Tech

Generally, equipment from one culture does not work well with that from another culture. Characters using a veth toolkit suffer a –4 penalty to repair imperial devices. First Empire technology is almost wholly at odds with any "modern" Jovian science, and so on. At 5th level and beyond, an Engineer can freely "mix and match" parts, using a First Empire battery to power an imperial lightning gun, for example.

Mastercraft

At 5th level, the Engineer becomes adept at creating mastercraft objects. He applies the mastercraft ability to one of his Craft skills (crystal, electronic, or mechanical). From this point on, he can build mastercraft objects using that skill.

With Craft (electronic), the Engineer can build electronic devices. With Craft (mechanical), the Engineer can build mechanical devices, including weapons. With Craft (crystal) the Engineer can build crystal-powered mastercraft weapons.

On average, it takes twice as long to build a mastercraft object as it does to build an ordinary object of the same type. The cost to build a mastercraft object is equal to the purchase DC for the components (see the appropriate Craft skill description) + the bonus provided by the mastercraft feature. You can add the mastercraft feature to an existing ordinary object by making the Wealth check and then making the Craft check as though you were constructing the object from scratch.

In addition to the Wealth check, the Engineer also must pay a cost in experience points equal to 25 × his Engineer level × the bonus provided by the mastercraft feature. The XP must be paid before making the Craft check. If the expenditure of these XP would drop the Engineer to below the minimum needed for his current level, the XP can't be paid and the Engineer can't use his mastercraft ability until he gains enough additional XP to remain at his current level after the expenditure is made.

When successfully completed, a mastercraft object provides a +1 bonus to its quality compared to an ordinary object of the same type. All weapons and armor, and certain other types of equipment, such as computers and electronic devices, can be constructed as mastercraft objects.

At 8th level, the Engineer can add the mastercraft ability to another Craft skill, or he can improve his ability in the skill he selected at 5th level, so that his mastercraft objects provide a +2 bonus.

At 10th level, the Engineer adds another +1 bonus to one of his mastercraft abilities or may assign the mastercraft ability to a third Craft skill.

The Craft DC of a mastercraft object is the same as for a normal object of the same type, as described in the Craft skill description, with the following modification: For a +1 object, add +3 to the Craft DC; for a +2 object, add +5 to the Craft DC; and for a +3 object, add +10 to the Craft DC.

Explorer

The Explorer is driven to seek out new sights, new experiences, new places. Some Explorers are relentless agents of the Iron Lords, always on the lookout for new lands to conquer. Others are independent adventurers who seek joy and new experiences beyond the horizon or the money from exploiting time-lost secrets. Still others are wilderness warriors roaming the wilds to protect civilized lands from barbarian hordes. An Explorer excels at surviving on her own, gathering information, and paying absolute attention to the natural world around her.

Table 3–3: The Explorer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+1	+1	+0	Terrain expert I	+1	+0
2	+1	+2	+2	+0	Master tracker	+1	+0
3	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4	+3	+2	+2	+1	Survivor	+2	+1
5	+3	+3	+3	+1	Terrain expert II, shelter	+3	+1
6	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7	+5	+4	+4	+2	Wilderness guide	+4	+2
8	+6	+4	+4	+2	Hunter's strike	+4	+2
9	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10	+7	+5	+5	+3	Terrain expert III	+5	+3

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Select this class if your character spends a lot of time away from civilization, or if you wish to improve your character's skill at wilderness survival and general alertness.

The fastest path into this advanced class is from the Dedicated hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become an Explorer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Survival 6 ranks, Treat Injury 6 ranks.

Feat: Track.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Explorer advanced class.

Hit Die: d6.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: The Explorer's class skills are as follows: Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Explorer advanced class.

Terrain Expert

The Explorer knows how to use the features of the natural environment to her benefit. At 1st level, an Explorer selects a "favored terrain" from the following list: Aquatic, Desert, Forest, Hill, Marsh, Mountains, Plains, and Underground. When on her favored terrain, the Explorer gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide, Spot, Listen, and Survival skill checks.

At 5th and 10th levels, the Explorer may chose an additional favored terrain or may apply an additional +2 circumstance bonus to the above checks while on her favored terrain, bringing the total to +4 or +6. Thus by 10th level, an Explorer can have three favored terrains at +2 each, one at +6, or one at +2 and one at +4.

Master Tracker

At 2nd level and thereafter, the Explorer may add a competence bonus equal to one-half her class levels on Survival checks related to tracking.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Explorer may choose a bonus feat from the following list. The Explorer must meet all the prerequisites of a feat to select it.

Alertness, Athletic, Dodge, Endurance, Focused, Great Fortitude, Guide, Low Profile, Quick Draw, Run, Stealthy.

Table 3–4: The Noble

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Right of passage	+0	+2
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	Investiture	+1	+2
3	+1	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+1	+2
4	+2	+1	+3	+3	Bonus class skill	+1	+3
5	+2	+1	+3	+3	Retinue	+2	+3
6	+3	+2	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+2	+3
7	+3	+2	+4	+4	Greater investiture	+2	+4
8	+4	+2	+4	+4	Bonus class skill	+3	+4
9	+4	+3	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+3	+4
10	+4	+3	+5	+5	Demand obedience	+3	+5

Survivor

At 4th level, an Explorer can survive on limited rations and in harsh conditions. She gains a +4 competence bonus on all checks to avoid the ill effects of starvation, thirst, or extreme heat and cold. This bonus applies only to "environmental effects," and not to the effects of direct exposure to fire, cold-based FX abilities, and so on.

Shelter

At 5th level, the Explorer develops an uncanny ability to locate shelter in the wilderness. Doing so requires the expenditure of an action point and a successful DC 15 Survival check. If the check fails, the action point is lost.

The GM should specify the type of shelter discovered, ensuring its suitability to the region and local environment. Possible shelters include an abandoned imperial fortress, a cave (complete with hidden entrance), the remains of a crashed sky dreadnought covered with menglor vines, or any other enclosed space large enough to shelter fewer than a dozen characters.

Those without the shelter class feature require a DC 30 Spot check to notice the shelter, so those within are reasonably safe from accidental discovery and can safely wait out the time required to mend wounds, examine artifacts, or otherwise pass several hours or days in relative safety.

Wilderness Guide

At 7th level, the Explorer can use the aid another action (*d20 Modern*, p. 47) to assist the Hide, Spot, Listen, and Survival checks of companions on her favored terrain. The bonus granted is equal to one-half the Explorer's favored terrain bonuses (see above).

Hunter's Strike

When battling animals (creatures with Int 2 or less) native to her favored terrains, an Explorer can increase her critical threat range by 1 for each time she has chosen a given terrain. Thus, if an Explorer has a +4 bonus to the appropriate skills when in Hills, she also has adds 2 to her critical threat range against animals native to the Hills.

Noble

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A Noble rules, either by blood or by ambition. Skilled at manipulating the body politic, Nobles excel at diplomacy and gathering resources. Their political and rhetorical experience and knowledge allows them to issue orders with little question of whether they will be obeyed, and sets them apart from the common rabble.

Select this class if your character comes from a wealthy or powerful background or if your character has achieved a position of leadership (being named Captain of the Guard or the Queen's Own Protector, for example) and wishes to exploit the political benefits of the position.

The fastest path to this class is from the Charismatic hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Noble, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Intimidate 6 ranks.

Feat: Renown.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Noble advanced class.

Hit Die: d6.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: The Noble's class skills are as follows: Concentration (Int), Craft (visual art, writing) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (current events, civics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Noble advanced class.

Right of Passage

Titles and prestige often open doors closed to the common folk. In lands in which the political force that granted the Noble his title hold sway, the Noble gains a circumstance bonus equal to one-half his class levels (minimum +1) on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks made to bypass guards, enter a celebration without an invitation, sit in the Purple Stands in the Arena of Kuldaar without the proper identification, or other such situations requiring clout and political prestige.

In lands unknown or hostile to the character's political entity, the character enjoys no bonus.

Investiture

At 2nd level, the Noble gains a small patch of land with a reasonable dwelling upon it, a used veth yacht, an upper-floor apartment in Kuldaar, or the like. He also gains a +3 Wealth bonus due to revenues related to his newfound prestige.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Noble may select a bonus feat from the following list. The Noble must meet all the prerequisites for the feat to select it.

Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Iron Will, Renown, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Bonus Class Skill

At 4th and 8th level, a Noble's access to a wide range of instructors and experts and extra time to indulge in extravagant hobbies allows him to select one cross-class skill, changing it to a class skill. Newly gained ranks in the skill may be purchased at the reduced cost, but the change has no effect upon previously purchased class ranks.

Retinue

At 5th level, the Noble gains a number of loyal servants equal to his Charisma bonus +1. Determine the servants' level by subtracting 5 from the Noble's character level. The GM determines the retinue's exact composition, but all are ordinaries as described on p. 270 of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Consult the Noble player for ideas on the type of retinue he'd enjoy, and do your best to make the NPCs fun background characters.

Despite the retinue's loyalty, they have their limit, and are not simply mindless drones. They meet orders to march into obvious death or to commit gross crimes with out-and-out refusal. Continued abuses force them to break for freedom at the earliest opportunity and report the offenses to the Noble's superiors or family.

Greater Investiture

At 7th level, the Noble receives an extremely valuable grant from his political entity. Possible greater investitures include a large plot of land with an estate and small village, a rooftop mansion in Kuldaar, or a luxurious large sky yacht. The prestige and revenues associated with the greater investiture grant the Noble a +3 Wealth bonus.

Demand Obedience

At 10th level, the Noble commands such prestige that his orders carry significant weight within his own realm. To issue an "impossible to refuse" order to an ordinary, the Noble expends an action point, forcing a target to make a successful Will save (DC = 10 + the Noble's class level + the Noble's Charisma modifier) or obey instantly.

Table 3–5: The Scholar

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Lost knowledge	+0	+0
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	Useful trivia	+1	+0
3	+1	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+1	+1
4	+2	+1	+2	+2	Scientific improvisation	+1	+1
5	+2	+1	+3	+3	Lost knowledge	+2	+1
6	+3	+2	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+2	+2
7	+3	+2	+4	+4	Linguistic lore	+2	+2
8	+4	+2	+4	+4	Skill mastery	+3	+2
9	+4	+3	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+3	+3
10	+5	+3	+5	+5	Lost knowledge	+3	+3

If following the order would result in the target's immediate death or injury, the target receives a +10 circumstance bonus to the saving throw. If following the order "merely" results in punishment or execution, however, the target receives no bonus. Thus a character ordered to "attack that charging zorl!" would likely receive a bonus, but a character ordered to "release those prisoners into my custody immediately!" would receive no bonus.

This effect works only on ordinaries, and has no effect upon regular characters.

Scholar

The world is ancient, and much lore has been lost or forgotten. The scholar knows of the time-lost empires whose ruins mar the landscape. She can name the elder cataclysms that carved the shorelines, and knows which berries grant a man immunity to flame for a time and which will kill him with slow agony. While not especially useful in hand-to-hand combat against the Green Serpent of Ishkar, a scholar's knowledge reveals that the serpent's weakness is its vulnerable third eye.

Select this class if you wish to know things. A lot of things. Things man was not meant to know, in some cases.

The fastest path to this class is from the Smart hero basic class.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Scholar, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Craft (crystal) 6 ranks or Craft (pharmaceutical) 6 ranks or Decipher Script 6 ranks plus 6 ranks in Knowledge (history, life sciences or technology) and Research 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Scholar advanced class.

Hit Die: d6.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: The Scholar's class skills are as follows: Craft (chemical, crystal, pharmaceutical, woodworking) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (history, earth and life sciences, physical sciences, technology) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

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Class Features

The following features pertain to the Engineer advanced class.

Lost Knowledge

At 1st, 5th, and 10th level, the scholar unearths an ancient secret that unlocks practical improvements. Select one of the following benefits:

- +1 Defense
- +1 base attack bonus
- +1d6 hit points
- +3 Wealth bonus
- +1 Reputation bonus
- Designate one additional skill as a class skill

Decide the nature of the secret and how understanding it grants the chosen benefit. For example, a Scholar might learn an ancient meditation ritual that dulls pain, granting extra hit points. Another secret might concern a long-forgotten method of improving the processing of *telgir*, granting the Scholar access to additional Wealth.

Useful Trivia

The Scholar accumulates a vast catalog of information in her brain. Every so often, a fact comes in extremely handy. By spending an action point, a Scholar can "remember" a bit of data which grants herself or an ally one of the following benefits:

- +5 on a skill check about to be made
- +2 on the character's next attack
- +1d6 damage to the character's next successful attack

The player should embrace the opportunity to roleplay the action. Rather than saying "I spend an action point and Kor deals +1d6 damage for the next round," say "Hmmmm. According to *Davren's Bestiary*, zorls have a particularly sensitive throat."

Bonus Feat

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels, the Scholar may choose a bonus feat from the following list. The Scholar must meet all the prerequisites for the feat to select it.

Attentive, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Creative, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Exotic Firearm Proficiency, Guide, Low Profile, Renown, Studious, Windfall.

Scientific Improvisation

At 4th level, a Scholar gains the ability to improvise solutions using common objects and her scientific know-how. This ability lets her create objects in a dramatic situation quickly and cheaply, but that have a limited duration.

By spending 1 action point and combining common objects with a Craft check that corresponds to the function desired, the Scholar can build a tool or device to deal with any situation. The DC for the craft check is equal to 5 + the purchase DC of the object that most closely matches the desired function. So, to improvise a single-use weapon that deals the same damage at the same range as a Desert Eagle, the DC for the Craft (mechanical) check is 23 (5 + 18).

Only objects that normally can be used more than once can be improvised. For example, a Scholar can't use scientific improvisation to build an explosive, since that's normally an object that's usable only once.

Electronic devices, special tools, weapons, mechanical devices, and more can be built with scientific improvisation. It takes a full-round action to make an object with scientific improvisation. The object, when put into use, lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Scholar's class level, or until the end of the current encounter, before it breaks down. It can't be repaired.

Linguistic Lore

At 7th level, the Scholar gains the ability to instantly learn a foreign language by comparing it to known languages and deciphering the changes made from their mutual root. In this manner, a Scholar may "learn" a number of languages equal to her Intelligence bonus. If the scholar later spends a skill point to learn the language, this frees up an additional linguistic lore "language slot."

Use of this ability requires observation of a living being speaking the language for a full minute. Linguistic lore cannot be used to decipher unknown script.

Skill Mastery

At 8th level, a Scholar selects a number of skills from her class list equal to 3 + her Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check using one of these skills, the Scholar may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent her from doing so. She becomes so accomplished in the use of these skills that she can use them reliably even under adverse conditions.

Trader

More than a simple shopkeeper or artisan, the Trader is a merchant-adventurer whose business dealings take her to distant lands known to most folk only in rumors. She can talk an Iron Lord into buying rust-proofing solution for his silken robes or convince the floating brains of Cloud Valley to buy wheeled riding carts. Always one step ahead of the law (and angry customers), the Trader is not above taking on some honest work now and then, if it can't be helped.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to be able to talk anyone out of or into anything, and if you want her to always get the best prices on goods and services.

The fastest path into this advanced class is from the Charismatic hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Trader, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Bluff 6 ranks.

Feat: Windfall.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Trader advanced class.

Hit Die: d6.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Trader advanced class.

Master Merchant

The Trader is an extraordinarily skilled bargainer. She may add her class levels on any Diplomacy or Bluff check, provided that the check is made in a business or trading situation. (Trying to convince a guard to let you pass a door is not such a situation; trying to convince someone to let you "lease" his prized vort for a fraction of what it's worth is.)

Patter

The Trader is a skilled weaver of words. With the expenditure of an action point, the Trader can force a target to make a successful Will save (DC = 10 + the Trader's class level + the Trader's Charisma modifier) or become enthralled by the Trader's patter for a number of rounds equal to the Trader's Charisma bonus. A target who fails the Will save can do nothing but listen to the trader's spiel unless attacked or otherwise directly threatened. The victim suffers a –4 penalty to any Spot or Listen checks while enthralled by the Trader's speech. This ability may be used on a given person only once per day.

Glib

"Would you believe... *two* Imperial Sky Dreadnoughts?"

At 3rd level, the Trader gains the ability to spend an action point to retry a failed Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

Small Fortune

The Trader has managed to pull off an impressive deal, and gains a +3 bonus to Wealth.

Bargainer

At 5th level, it becomes nearly impossible to convince the Trader to pay anything but absolute rock bottom prices for anything. By spending an action point and winning an opposed Diplomacy check with another merchant, the Trader can subtract a number up to her Charisma bonus from an item's purchase DC (minimum 1).

Packing

A Trader must move a lot of goods, often with limited help. Knowledge of how to optimally pack containers and distribute weight allows a trader to increase her carrying capacity by 25%.

What You Want

At 7th level, a Trader can gain uncanny insight into a target's desires. The Trader must speak with the target for a full minute. Thereafter, she makes a DC 20 Sense Motive check. Success indicates she has figured out what the target really wants or needs, even if the target has not said so explicitly. If the trader has access to the item (or can convince the target she can get access to it with a successful Bluff check), the target's attitude toward the trader immediately improves by one step.

Large Fortune

The Trader has succeeded in an exceptionally lucrative deal, and gains an additional +3 Wealth bonus.

Good For It

At 10th level, the Trader is so skilled at negotiation that she can convince a seller that payment is forthcoming even when it is not. She may spend up to 5 action points in one round to increase her effective Wealth by 2 per action point (granting a maximum +10 bonus).

The Trader then chooses one of the following options:

- **Pay it off:** The trader's Wealth is reduced by the amount gained, and recovers at 1 per month.
- **Skip town:** The trader's normal Wealth remains

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Table 3–6: The Trader

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+0	+1	+2	Master merchant	+0	+1
2	+1	+0	+2	+3	Patter	+1	+1
3	+2	+1	+2	+3	Glib, bonus feat	+1	+1
4	+3	+1	+2	+4	Small fortune	+1	+2
5	+3	+1	+3	+4	Bargainer, packing	+2	+2
6	+4	+2	+3	+5	Bonus feat	+2	+2
7	+5	+2	+4	+5	What you want	+2	+3
8	+6	+2	+4	+6	Large fortune	+3	+3
9	+6	+3	+4	+6	Bonus feat	+3	+3
10	+7	+3	+5	+7	Good for it	+3	+4

unchanged, but she gains an enemy. The extent of the merchant's enmity and how it ultimately affects the campaign is up to the GM.

Wise One

Some secrets aren't found in books. The ways of the world reveal themselves not only to the clever, but also to the wise. Listen to the sound of the trees, the ripple of the water, the laughter of the wind, and you may learn more than you will ever find in ancient tomes or knowledge gems. The Wise One follows such a path, mastering skills and lore passed down through personal training and tradition. Wise Ones master the arts of healing and unlock the secrets of the animal world.

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Select this class if you wish to benefit from time spent under the tutelage of a tribal shaman or healer.

The fastest path to this class is from the Dedicated hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Wise One, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Treat Injury 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks, Knowledge (biology) 4 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Wise One advanced class.

Hit Die: d8.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down.

Class Skills: The Wise One's class skills are as follows: Concentrate (Con), Craft (pharmaceutical) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, current events, earth and life sciences, popular culture, technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Healing Lore

A 1st-level Wise One may add a +1 competence bonus on any Treat Injury skill check. The bonus increases by +1 at 5th and 8th level.

Table 3–7: The Wise One

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+2	+0	+1	Healing lore +1	+1	+1
2	+1	+3	+0	+2	Expert healer	+1	+1
3	+1	+3	+1	+2	Bonus feat, medicine bag	+2	+1
4	+2	+4	+1	+2	Antidote	+2	+2
5	+2	+4	+1	+3	Healing lore +2	+3	+2
6	+3	+5	+2	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7	+3	+5	+2	+4	Minor medical miracle, Improve poison	+4	+3
8	+4	+6	+2	+4	Healing lore +3	+4	+3
9	+4	+6	+3	+4	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10	+5	+7	+3	+5	Medical miracle	+5	+4

Expert Healer

At 2nd level and higher, the Wise One's ability to restore hit points with an herb bag or surgery kit and a successful use of the Treat Injury skill improves. In addition to the normal hit point recovery rate (1d4 for an herb bag, 1d6 per patient's character level for a surgery kit), the Wise One restores 1 hit point for every level he has in this advanced class.

Medicine Bag

Upon reaching 3rd level, the Wise One can go on a spirit quest, spending at least a week in the wilderness, gathering the best herbs, roots, leaves, dried insects, and other natural remedies and reagents and placing them into his personalized medicine bag. The bag operates as a special herb bag (see Chapter 4), granting the Wise One a +2 circumstance bonus on Treat Injury checks so long as the bag is in his possession. The Wise One must spend one full day per month to restock the medicine bag. If the bag is lost or destroyed, the Wise One may gather another by spending one week on another spirit quest in the wilderness.

Antidote

At 4th level, the Wise One becomes unusually well versed in the ways of poisons and their natural treatments. If he has access to his medicine bag (see above), the Wise One may spend an action point to attempt to negate a poison's effects before the victim has made her secondary save (for example, if the poisoning occurred less than a minute ago). To do so, the Wise One makes a Treat Injury check with a DC equal to the DC of the poison's initial save. If the check is successful, the poison's victim automatically succeeds her secondary save. If the Wise One succeeds by more than 5, half of the damage already done is negated (round fractions down).

Minor Medical Miracle

At 7th level or higher, a Wise One can save a character reduced to –10 hit points or lower. If the Wise One is able to administer aid within 3 rounds of the character's death, he can make a Treat Injury check. The DC for this check is 30, and the Wise One can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to stabilize and be restored to 0 hit points.

If the Wise One fails the skill check or the patient fails the save, the dead character can't be saved.

Improve Poison

In addition to curing poisons, a Wise One of 7th level or higher can amplify their effects. Doing so requires an hour of contemplation of a poison dose and the Wise One's medicine bag (see above). On a successful Knowledge (biology) skill check (with a DC equal to the poison's original save DC), the Wise One can increase the poison's save DC by 3 or add 1 to the damage dealt by the poison's primary and secondary effects. Improving a poison's damage and save DC requires two hours of experimentation and two successful Knowledge (biology) checks against the poison's original save DC.

Failing the Knowledge check by more than 5 or rolling a "natural 1" indicates harmful exposure to the poison. The Wise One suffers the poison's effects without the benefit of a primary saving throw (he does, however, receive a secondary save).

Medical Miracle

At 10th level, a Wise One can revive a character reduced to –10 hit points or lower. If the Wise One is able to administer aid within 3 minutes of the character's death, he can make a Treat Injury check. The DC for this check is 40, and the Wise One can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to stabilize and be restored to 1d6 hit points.

If the Wise One fails the skill check or the patient fails the Fortitude save, the dead character can't be restored.

IV: WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

Jupiter is not what scientists think it is. Beneath the upper layers of atmosphere exists not simply more gas shrouding a core of compressed liquid helium, but rather a world much like Earth, only many times larger. This world has almost no dense metals; despite its vast bulk, its gravity is roughly equal to that of Earth. A breathable oxygen atmosphere shrouds the planet. Perpetual lightning storms above the air layer provide a source of light. Beneath this eternal glow, life has taken root. A hundred different races share the world, and uncounted thousands of societies have formed.

Centuries ago, an iron-based asteroid at least a hundred miles long crashed into the world. The culture which found it soon learned the secrets of ironworking, and, using the strange metal from beyond the sky carved out the greatest empire Jupiter had ever known. Taking its name from iron, it called itself the Grey Empire. The rulers of the empire became known as the Iron Lords of Jupiter!

The Skyglow

Strikingly unlike that of Earth, Jupiter's sky is a solid mass of luminescence. The people of Jupiter know of no sun, no stars, no moons. They do not distinguish between day and night. The glow beyond the clouds brightens sometimes, as strange storms rage in the atmosphere above it. Sometimes it dims, some mysterious reaction of energy and chemicals. But there is no timing or cycle to these events. This phenomenon has had many effects on day-to-day life on Jupiter.

Timekeeping: With no sun, moon, or stars, timekeeping is arbitrary. The basic unit of time is the "sleep," roughly equal to eight hours. There are, thus, three sleeps in a Terran day. Beyond the "sleep," time grows even more arbitrary. Within the empire and its domains, units of time include the *daal* (equal to ten sleeps, or about three days); the *tovdaal* (ten daals, or very roughly a month); and the *vikaan* (which translates roughly to "generation," and is about 30 Earth years).

The Empire requires precision, and has developed complex electromechanical clocks which synchronize with each other via etheric waves. Sky-dreadnoughts often carry such clocks, which use batteries to keep the time and re-sync when the ships return to Kuldaar.

Navigation: Without stars, a moon, or magnetic north, navigating out of sight of land is extremely difficult, and rarely attempted. As a result, travel around the larger seas and oceans is a slow affair, involving hugging the coastline and slowly circumnavigating the sea. Islands, even sizeable ones, located in the centers of the sea may never be encountered. As a result, the locations of many "lost" or "legendary" sites are said to lie on such islands, making verification of the legend difficult or impossible.

The First Empire

Throughout Jupiter, there exist locations which bear tribute to the existence of a mighty, perhaps even globe-spanning, power, which nonetheless vanished before the recorded history of any race known to the marikon or veth. Only the faded outlines of cities, strange artifacts, and extraordinary relics remain. Legends of intact or nearly intact cities, brimming with artifacts and lost knowledge, continue to lure treasure hunters from throughout the world.

First Empire technology is almost incomprehensible. It does not use the metals and alloys of the Grey Empire, nor the crystals and woods of most other Jovian civilizations. A human would say their devices are made of plastic, but only because the hard, light, materials used resemble nothing else. The secrets of their manufacture are long lost. Within the Grey Empire, all artifacts are considered "imperial property" and will be impounded unless the owner can provide documentation showing that they are licensed to use the device. Such artifacts include:

Sky bracelet: A small bracelet made of striated bands of black and white "plastic," the bracelet is warm to the touch (as is most First Empire technology), and contains several small depressions in the surface. Experimentation

reveals that one depression causes the wearer of the bracelet to rise at a rate of 20 feet per round, a second lowers the wearer to the ground at half that speed, and a third grants forward momentum, with the wearer able to control his direction by shifting position. The bracelet provides a flight speed of 60, and generally provides one hour of levitation before it must recharge itself, which it does by unknown means. The recharging period lasts twelve hours. The bracelet deposits the wearer on the ground if its power is running low. Sky bracelets are among the more common First Empire artifacts, though they are still very rare. **Purchase DC:** 30.

Paralysis Beamer: Yellow spiral patterns cover this smooth ovoid of red "plastic." A small dimpled indentation and raised bump mark one end. Pressing the bump blasts a beam of brilliant blue, perfectly straight light from the indentation. Any living being struck by the beam must make a successful DC 18 Fortitude save to avoid becoming paralyzed for 1 minute, plus 1 minute for each point by which the save failed. The beam does not effect undead, constructs, outsiders, or oozes. A paralysis beamer is an exotic firearm with a range increment of 20 feet. Most beamers have enough power for 20 shots. They cannot be recharged. **Purchase DC:** 35.

The Grey Empire

The Grey Empire sprawls along the western shore of the Cuthalik Ocean, with the capital city of Kuldaar ringing a large bay and sprawling outward onto several islands. From Kuldaar, a webwork of roads links the many foundries, smelting pits, and mines which surround the city. The iron industry is the key to the empire's existence, and the Iron Lords fear letting it out of their sight.

Kuldaar itself is a marvel. The huge city holds at least ten million beings, drawn from a dozen races. Crystal and steel towers strain toward the eternal neon sky, and steam-powered trains chug along mazes of tracks. Flying cars, the province of the wealthy, flit from building to building above rooftop expanses planted with exotic vegetation. Far below lies the dank undercity, where escaped slaves, criminals, and the poor dwell in perpetual lightless squalor.

Kuldaar's most outstanding structure is its arena, a gargantuan circle ringed by row after row of tiered seats, the cultural centerpiece of the city. Scores of lesser venues, hosting smaller events or more personal conflicts, surround the central arena, forming a virtual city based upon gambling, excess, bloodsport, and vice. Beneath the streets, a complex maze of holding pens, slave dwellings, and storerooms serve as home to the underclass of guards, menials, and gladiators who staff the festivities above. Some arena workers do not see the skyglow for weeks at a time.

The city's busy ports keep Kuldaar alive, bringing in food and trade goods from the provinces surrounding the Cuthalik. The ports ship out armies to garrison existing provinces and conquer new ones, for the growth of the empire demands eternal fresh blood. Some day, the Iron Lords claim, every nation will pay fealty to Kuldaar.

For a thousand miles in every direction from the city, there are no more nations, just provinces of the Empire. Beyond this border, nations exist mostly at the sufferance of the Empire, and they know it. None dare speak out. Only in lands more distant yet do folk speak openly of rebellion or resistance.

One of the nations most newly taken by the empire is the City-State of Salimar, once the capital of an empire itself. Today, it is the last true city of the veth, and it rules, or at least oversees, a collection of small towns and villages, the final dregs of what was once a mighty power. A small number of veth remember their own days of glory, and refuse to gently fade into nothingness as servitors of the Iron Lords. While the empire usually ignores such sentiments, their continual expression by the Prince-Heir to Veth has angered the provincial governor, which is why the prince was recently "invited" to Kuldaar, where he is effectively a political prisoner. So long as he remains thus, no rebellion will take hold in the Salimar domains.

Technology

Jupiter's technology has been shaped, above all, by the relative rarity of metal. The necessary reliance upon wood, animal parts, and crystals might have stranded the planet in a state of near-barbarism but for the fact that many of Jupiter's natural materials possess unusually beneficial properties.

One such material is *lunth*, a pale lavender crystal usually found imbedded in igneous rock strata. On the surface, *lunth* is simply a pretty crystal, useful as jewelry and nothing more. When properly treated, however, it emits a field that counters the force of gravitation. Focusing light through a *lunth* crystal at specific angles directs this field, making it possible for the crystal to lift and propel a craft.

The related jade green or ruby red *kivas* crystals are considerably rarer. When correctly shaped (a delicate art) and exposed to a brief electric spark, a *kivas* crystal discharges a bolt of deadly energy. The bolt's force depends upon the size of the crystal and spark. Each crystal holds a limited number of charges before it must be recharged. *Kivas* crystals gain 1 charge for each hour of exposure to the skyglow.

Jovians use flawed or misshapen *kivas* in the production of *jirathite*, a powerful explosive. *Jirathite* resembles a reddish-brown clay, and bears a distinctly "gritty" texture. While used much as earthling use plastic explosives, *jirathite* also commonly serves as the primary ingredient of crude clay grenades. *Jirathite* rarely reacts to impact, but even a tiny electric spark may set it off.

The less common *telgir* wood, harvested from trees found in the temperate zones surrounding the Cuthalik Ocean, is light and easy to carve when harvested, but becomes as strong as bronze when exposed to a low flame over a period of several days. Jovians use *telgir* primarily for weapons and tools.

Jovians excel at the processing of animal parts. The hide of a gorlak, a sort of snake-cow, makes excellent armor. Other animal parts become nails, cloth, or tools. Though they lack motors or engines (the Iron Lords notwithstanding), Jovian cultures have managed to build great cities and enjoy a high level of comfort in their daily lives.

The Iron Lords, with access to metal, have discovered much of the technology of nineteenth century Earth, combining it with the native technology of Jupiter to great effect. *Lunth*-powered iron warships cruise the skies, and gorlak-hide armor laced with steel turns blades of *telgir* aside. The Jovians lack gunpowder, possibly because sulphur is rare and possibly because *kivas* crystals provide all the ranged killing power anyone could want.

Jovian technology includes:

Visio screens: Usually circular in form and ranging from 1 foot to 4 feet in diameter, a visio screen displays a black and white image. A row of controls along the bottom allows a user to "dial" the screen to "call" a particular individual or location. Visio screens are all two-way; anyone in front of one can be seen by the person they are talking to. Occasionally, the Iron Lords usurp the entire screen network for a one-way announcement or proclamation transmission. **Purchase DC:** 20.

Monorails: Kuldaar's wealthy get around in private aircars, but the majority of its citizens use the monorail network which crosses the city like an iron web. Monorail trains run continuously, powered by steam engines made possible by imperial iron. The noisy monorail cars vibrate ferociously, but they'll get you where you need to go.

Other Locations

Jupiter is an immense world, and the realm of the Grey Empire is, ultimately, a very small part of it. Some other interesting locales include:

The Vastness: While the Cuthalik Ocean is large—roughly the size of Earth's Atlantic—it is a small lake compared to the Vastness, a massive body of water whose exact extent has never been measured. Its uncharted depths extend more than twenty miles below the surface of the water. Travelers and explorers hug the coastline—it has never been crossed—and a full circumnavigation could take decades. The ocean's inner reaches could hold any number of secrets, including immense island continents, beasts of staggering size and bizarre configuration, odd cultures and civilizations, and more.

The Spongewood: Save for a wider range of coloration, most of Jupiter's trees roughly resemble those of Earth. The bizarre region known as the Spongewood is a notable exception. Giant fungi dominates the Spongewood, ranging from tiny mushroom patches to towering thirty-foot fungal trees. Numerous unusual lifeforms, many unique to the region, dwell within the Spongewood.

Legends suggest that the Spongewood was created in an event similar to the Skyfall—that the sky vomited forth a piece of itself which landed here and produced this place. Though no known intelligent species inhabit the fungal forest, travelers report strange manlike shapes moving among the stalks, and it's certainly true that not all those who enter the deepest part of the wood return. Renegades and refugees often attempt to find safe haven here, as few will pursue a fleeing man into the murky and ill-smelling forest depths.

Equipment

In general, any mundane item which could exist at the local technological level, and which does not require metal, could be found given some time to look. If the PCs need them, assign a suitable cost and make the relevant Wealth checks.

Iron weapons far outclass any other melee weapon on Jupiter. Decrease the armor bonus of any armor (including the natural armor of animals) by 2 when that armor is used against iron weapons.

Veth dagger: The most common weapon carried by free veth, this slim blade is made of a polished and sharpened *kliver* thorn set into an ornate grip.

Veth dueling blade: Generally possessed only by members of the upper class, this thin, slightly curved blade of *telgir* wood resembles a cross between a scimitar and a fencing foil. Each weapon's unique wood grain makes it distinctive—the patterns on the grain become a mark by which the weapon is known. Over time, a well-used blade absorbs enough blood to become almost pitch black. Jovians respect and fear the wielders of such "deep-stained blades," and such wielders are often challenged by young bravos seeking to prove their merit.

Iron knife: A typical imperial weapon, iron knives are nearly commonplace even outside of Kuldaar, as many have been manufactured. There is little distinctive about the short, thick, single-edged knife.

Iron short blade: The weapon of the Grey Legions, the short blade doubles as a single-edged slashing weapon with a nastily serrated edge.

Iron long blade: The heavy, double-edged long blade is generally carried only by elite soldiers and bodyguards within the empire. Within the bounds of the empire, possession by unauthorized wielders is usually met with summary execution.

***Kivas* blade (exotic):** Very few *kivas* blades are made today; those who have access to the rare crystals prefer to use them in guns. Some few remain, however, and craftsmen adept in the ancient ways still know the secret of their manufacture. Composed of a length of *telgir* wood inset with perfectly carved slivers of kivas set at key points, a *kivas* blade also bears a sparking device built into its hilt. The blade unleashes a charge of energy as it contacts flesh, dealing fire damage in addition to the blade's normal damage.

A *kivas* blade can unleash 10 bolts before it must be recharged. It continues to function as a normal weapon even after its charges have been expended. Making a *kivas* blade requires DC 25 Craft (woodworking) and Craft (crys-

Table 4–1: Equipment

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Veth dagger	1d4	19–20	Piercing	Tiny	1 lb.	4	—
Veth dueling blade	1d6	19–20	Slashing	Medium	5 lb.	7	—
Iron knife	1d4	20	Slashing	Tiny	1.5 lb.	10	Imperial (–2)
Iron short blade	1d6	20	Slashing	Small	3.0 lb.	12	Imperial (–4)
Iron long blade	1d8	20	Slashing	Medium	8.0 lb.	15	Imperial (–6)
Bladed lash	1d6	20	Slashing	Medium	4.0 lb.	10	Imperial (–3)
Kivas blade	1d4+1d6	20	Slashing + Fire	Small	2.0 lb.	21	—
Marikon bone spikes	see below	20	Slashing	Tiny	.25 lb.	18	—

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Dam. Type	Range Inc.	ROF	Magazine	Size	Weight	DC	Restriction
Kivas blaster	2d6	20	Fire	40	S	20*	S	2 lb.	18	—
Kivas bolter	2d8	20	Fire	20	S	10	S	3 lb.	20	—
Kivas hunting rifle	2d8	20	Fire	60	S	15	M	6 lb.	21	—
Lightning rifle	2d6	20	Elec.	30	S	20	M	8 lb.	16	Imperial (–4)

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Dam. Type	Burst Radius	Ref. DC	Range Inc.	Size	Weight	DC	Restriction
Jirathite	3d6	—	Conc.	5 ft.	15	10 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	18	Imperial (–3)

Object	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Zorlblood elixir	Tiny	0.25 lb.	20
Herb bag	Medium	1 lb.	18

tal) checks. The same craftsman must make both checks.

***Kivas* blaster:** The most common type of *kivas*-based weapon, this pistol bears an ornately carved wooded grip that houses a sparking mechanism and the weapon's trigger. Two sturdy tines secure the *kivas* crystal, with a polished glass lens at the end of the tines serving to focus the weapon's energy discharge.

***Kivas* bolter:** Much less common than the blaster and favored by those who know they will be close to their enemy before managing to get off a shot, a *kivas* blaster uses a high-powered spark and a dispersion lens to create a powerful (but slightly inaccurate) bolt.

Lightning rifle: Due to the rarity of *kivas* and the delicate work required to shape and set the crystals, mass production of *kivas*-based armaments is impossible. Thus, the Iron Lords have created the lightning rifle, bulky but effective bolt casters crafted from the metal only they have mastered. The weapon fires an arc of powerful electricity at a target. Wielders can adjust the weapon to fork the bolt, striking two targets which are no more than ten feet apart. Each target is attacked separately, and both attacks are made at –4. This consumes two charges.

Marikon bone spikes: This set of several small, hooked, metal blades, designed to fit onto marikon outcroppings, increases the damage of a marikon's unarmed attack by +1.

Jirathite: This powerful explosive resembles grainy red clay. Usually triggered by a simple mechanical timer, a small chip of *kivas*, and a spark. Impact is not enough to detonate *jirathite*, but a bolt fired from a *kivas*-powered weapon at a lump of *jirathite* will ignite the substance.

Anyone holding *jirathite* who is struck by such a weapon must make a DC 10 Reflex save or the material will be ignited. Transporting *jirathite* is not for the cowardly, or for the wise.

Zorlblood elixir: This potent drug, made from the blood of a deadly native creature known as a zorl, has tremendous restorative powers. A single vial, once consumed, cures 2d6 hit points instantly. Manufacturing one dose of this drug requires a DC 18 Craft (chemistry) check.

Herb bag: This belt pouch contains many small pockets and compartments, filled with a variety of medicinal supplies—dried herbs, roots, elixirs, and so on needed for Treat Injury checks.

Language

The folk of Jupiter do not speak one tongue. Indeed, cataloging the languages of the world is a task which occupies scholars across the planet; none have managed to document more than a small portion. The most common languages in the area around the Cuthalik Ocean are:

Lordly Speech: The refined language of the Iron Lords, used by the upper classes only. For a lesser being to speak it, except under precisely defined circumstances, is a grievous crime.

Baser Speech (also known as Imperial): The "common tongue" of the Grey Empire, almost everyone within the empire's reach has mastered a few words of it.

High Veth: A lyrical, intricate language used by the veth, though other races consider it formal and stuffy.

Ta'Veth: A pidgin of Veth and Baser Speech, used by most veth in day-to-day conversation.

Groll: The language of the groll, a tongue which some scholars dismiss as simplistic but which contains many subtleties lost on those who do not live the rough Groll lifestyle.

The following scenario presents one possible "introduction" to the world of Jupiter and the Iron Lords. Before you begin play, determine which player characters will be Natives, and which will be Strangers. Vehicles and creatures mentioned in this chapter will appear in the next issue of *Polyhedron*.

Act I: The Voyage of *Minerva*

In 2091, the United American Alliance launched the spaceship *Minerva*, the first manned expedition to Jupiter. *Minerva* was intended to establish a stable orbit around the giant planet, and from there launch a series of missions to explore the moons of Jupiter, most especially Europa.

Stranger PCs are members of *Minerva's* crew. If the PCs begin at 1st level, their crew positions should reflect this—Medical Assistant, Secondary Computer Technician, Cargo Handler, and the like. Saddling the characters with such minor positions will help them in the long run, as the skills and feats necessary to run or manage a spacecraft will be of little use in the campaign to come. First-level characters will have a greater opportunity to shape themselves to fit their new world.

Native PCs will have little to do in the early stages of the first adventure. To make sure no one has to sit out and wait for the action, assign players of Native characters an NPC, a doomed member of *Minerva's* crew. For an added spin, ask the Native PC players to pretend their NPCs are their real characters, which will make their deaths seem more shocking to the survivors.

The voyage from Earth to Jupiter goes smootly. Give each player a few minutes of spotlight time to introduce their character, but don't spend too much time on the preliminaries. A video-mail from home, a slight problem with the ship's "intake manifold," or a dispute over maintenance duties can all provide a bit of character flavor.

As *Minerva* approaches Jupiter, something goes terribly wrong. The ship's engines refuse to obey the navigation consule. Gravity and other crucial readings go haywire. Nothing coming through the ship's sensors match expectations, and *Minerva's* carefully plotted orbit goes straight to Hell.

Let the players discuss emergency options, but nothing will work. In minutes, the doomed Minerva finds itself in a decaying spiral sure to lead to a quick death in the crushing pressure of Jupiter's upper atmosphere.

If the PCs don't think of it first, an NPC suggests a run for the ship's emergency shuttlecraft. The small vessels boast powerful engines of their own, and theoretically have the power to blast out of Jupiter's voracious orbit. Such an escape won't offer the crew long-term survival, but it might grant them the time to discover what went wrong and enable them to warn allies on Earth who might some day come after them. Somehow, the player characters end up on the same shuttlecraft.

Despite its strong engines, the PCs' shuttle falls victim to the same force that drew Minerva into the swirling yellow and red clouds of Jupiter. Death is imminent, leaving nothing left to do but wait for the planet's pressure to crush the shuttle. Atmospheric pressure rises and rises as the PCs descend; the ship's hull creaks ominously.

Suddenly, the pressure eases and the thick acidic clouds outside the windows clear, revealing a quick glimpse of an Earthlike landscape. The PCs make out a massive city on the distant shores of a vast ocean into which the shuttle plunges with increasing speed. The shuttle impacts sharply with the water. Somehow, its delicate crew survives!

Crashed on Jupiter!

Now the campaign truly begins. The PCs' shuttle rapidly takes on water but remains momentarily afloat some 25 miles from the city of Kuldaar. Give the PCs some time to consider their predicament, roleplaying shock at being alive and afloat on an ocean of salt water, surrounded by breathable air when by all rights they should be dead. They won't have long to wonder if they might have reached some sort of afterlife, however, as the shuttle sinks ten minutes after crashing into the turbulent waters.

About five minutes before the shuttle sinks forever, the nearby water begins to churn and the head and fore-ten-

tacles of a nalthis emerge from the deep. Naturally, the horrid creature attacks the player characters.

Patrol Sixteen

The shuttlecraft's crash attracts the attention of Patrol Sixteen, the crew of a small boat that serves as one of hundreds used by the Grey Empire to hunt for smugglers or spies in the waters near Kuldaar. If the PCs' battle against the nalthis goes poorly, the boat arrives in time to offer assistance. Otherwise, it keeps a safe distance until after the fight is over.

Stock Patrol Sixteen's sleek wooden craft with enough marikon archers (Strong2/Tough1 ordinaries) to prevent the player characters from hoping they can overpower it. The archers train their bows and crossbows upon the PCs, looking to a hardy marikon male who appears to be their leader. This figure, Commander Torgan (a Strong2/Dedicated2 ordinary), assumes the PCs are smugglers or escaped slaves until he gets a good look at them.

Torgan attempts to question the PCs, but the language barrier proves problematic. The players may wish to pantomime their plight, but this does little good, as Torgan has no concept of "worlds beyond the sky." No Jovian has ever seen the stars.

The skeptical Commander Torgan takes the characters into custody, stripping them of their gear, which he places in his private quarters for further study. The wind-powered voyage back to Kuldaar (helped in part by the load-lightening powers of lunth crystals) takes a full day, during which the PCs are thrown into the cargo hold with other prisoners—the Native PCs.

Act II: The Strangers Arrive

Each Native PC should have a good reason for having been picked up in the Cuthalik Ocean by Patrol Sixteen. Perhaps they're humble fisherfolk who simply lost or forgot to bring their identification papers. Perhaps they're smugglers, fleeing slaves, explorers from far across the ocean, or just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Either way, the Native PCs and other Native NPCs in the cargo hold will be curious about the Strangers, and become even more curious once they discover no known language can breach the communications barrier. If any of the Strangers chose to reserve skill points, now is a great time to spend one on the Speak Language skill in order to pick up a Native language. Explain the newly bought skill as memories flowing up from dreams like strange déja vu, perhaps establishing an excuse for the character to later pick up the Strange Memories feat.

Unless the PCs start trouble (a very likely occurrance), the day passes without major incident. The prisoners endure a seemingly endless string of minor abuses—poor food, filthy water, and the occasional surprise punch from one of the marikon guards—but little beyond that.

The marikon guards "escort" the passengers topside as the ship docks at Kuldaar's port. Seen up close, the sprawling city is both magnificent and terrifying. The heights of the gray city stretch far above, but the PCs face rough wooden docks stinking with rotting sealife and trash dumped from above. The guards herd their prisoners to Kuldaar's lower levels, primitive structures composed of worked stone.

Once on dry land, the PCs may try to make a break for freedom. The guards are fairly tough, but should not be unbeatable, especially with the help of the Native PCs. Should the prisoners escape, they find themselves alone in a city that considers them criminals. None of the PCs have required identification, and Strangers have no knowledge of local culture. The characters must fight off would-be captors at every turn, and it's likely they'll find themselves imprisoned again shortly. If they somehow manage to evade pursuit (player characters can surprise you that way), proceed to Act IV: Escape!

Act III: The Arena of Kuldaar

Assuming the PCs do not escape, they soon find themselves in the lower levels of the city's vast Arena—Level Six, Sector 2, to be precise. The ancient stone walls stink with festering mold, and the bars on the PCs' cell are made of *telgir* wood, not the iron of newer marikon construction. One of the oldest sections of the arena still in active use, Sector 2 holds those prisoners deemed the lowest of possible orders, not even fit for good sport. No one survives here long.

The PCs and their newfound Native companions get a chance to know each other, as their captors leave them in the cell for two days with a number of Native NPCs.

Commander Torgan dumps the PCs' equipment in a nearby chamber, waiting for higher-ranking arena officers to attempt to make sense of it. Attentive prisoners might pick up guard chatter about "strange items" recently brought in from the unusual prisoners, including a room number corresponding to the items' location. Getting their equipment back will be an obvious and immediate goal for the PCs, so do your best to make the room's location obvious to your players.

As the players sit and wait for something terrible to happen, introduce some of the following encounters:

- A large, bullying marikon criminal, sentenced to death, attempts to intimidate the player character with the lowest Strength score.
- An elderly veth prisoner suddenly takes ill. The guards do nothing, but perhaps the PCs can aid him.
- A groll prisoner undertakes a bizarre ritual dance.
- A veth and groll come to blows over a petty argument about sleeping space. The PCs may choose to favor one over the other, or may attempt to break up the fight.
- Marikon guards remove several random prisoners (all NPCs) from the cell. Hours later, the guards callously drag their grisly remains past the cell. If the PCs had befriended one or more of the dead NPCs, so much the better.
- At some point, the PCs should aid or befriend a veth prisoner. This will become important as the adventure progresses.

Escape seems unlikely, as their guards (all Strong2 ordinaries) seldom open the cell door. Even food is slipped through the bars (break DC 27), leaving little chance for a surprise break-out. Any time a guard opens the cell, at least three more guards (armed with longspears) than there are PCs stand ready for a prisoner revolt. Any call of alarm summons five additional guards within 1d4 rounds.

The guards care nothing for ill prisoners or squabbles between captives. They have no wish to interrogate the prisoners, so calls of "I'll tell you everything I know" hold little allure. Nonetheless, should the PCs manage to devise a suitably cunning plan for escape, resist the urge to punish them and proceed to Act IV.

After two agonizing days, the guards release the PCs and a handful of NPCs (seemingly calling them out at random, as above). Under heavy guard, the jailers provide the party with primitive weapons (crude copies of veth daggers that deal 1 fewer point of damage per hit and break on a natural 1 on the attack roll). The guards then force the captives onto the gray sands of the arena, where a bored crowd stares down at them with undisguised contempt. Characters who speak Imperial recognize shouts to "get it over with" and demands to "bring on the real warriors." Particularly zealous members of the crowd pelt the PCs with unusual rotten fruit.

Positioned at a distant balcony, the arena master allows the shouting to die down before issuing a dramatic gesture. A previously disguised trap door at the center of the arena opens, revealing a hulking kluuv. The crowd roars as the gargantuan spider beast lunges hungrily toward the PCs!

Include enough disposable NPCs among the players' group to allow the characters to defeat the kluuv with minimal injuries. Don't hesitate to kill off most or all of the NPCs, and be sure to play up the crowd reaction to every gory death. This first exposure to the decadent marikon culture should forever quash any hopes the players might have of finding acceptance in their new home.

As one NPC dies, she slips a small key to a player character, revealing the location of a hidden exit in a storeroom between the arena entrance and the room holding the PCs' equipment. All the PCs must do is break free as they are being herded back to their cell and make a run for it...

Act IV: Escape!

Eventually, the PCs should break free of their imperial captors. Perhaps they've escaped through the secret passage revealed by the dying alien in Act III, or perhaps they've managed to create their own escape from captivity. One way or another, they find themselves in an underground passage, fleeing the city above.

The passage terminates in a wide ledge overlooking a steep cliff. A crimson jungle covers the ground below the cliff, and a large river lazily twists its way through the leafy expanse. A curious craft, apparently an air vehicle of some sort, stands perched upon the precepice. The unusual device is large enough to hold all the PCs, but seems to lack any obvious wings.

Ideally, one of the Native PCs knows how to fly a veth yacht. If not, now is a good time to cash in some reserved skill points in order to learn. Alternatively, the PCs can attempt to climb down the cliff, from whence they can follow the river or explore the jungle.

Native PCs soon deduce that the veth city of Salimar, a theoretically safe destination, should lie somewhere just beyond the woods, about four days away. The jungle itself provides ample food and water.

Naturally, something goes wrong. About two days into the journey, a bathar, flying far from its usual territory, attacks the yacht. The battle severely damages the ship, causing it to land in the jungle. The severity of the crash depends upon the PCs' piloting skill. Landing the damaged ship requires a DC 20 Pilot check. Each 3 points by which the check fails results in 1d6 points of damage to all passengers (DC 15 Reflex save for half damage).

The bathar, likely wounded or slain during the conflict, spins out of control and into the jungle near where the PCs land. A search of its body reveals the remains of a riding tackle as well as a pouch containing numerous documents. Although written in the veth alphabet, the documents have been coded and are impossible to decipher. The pouch bears the seal of the High Lord of Salimar, a symbol instantly recognizable to Native PCs.

The message encoded into the documents is entirely up to the GM. The pouch and its contents should be enough to encourage the players to travel to Salimar and to win some degree of favor from the High Lord. Beyond that, who knows? An entire world of adventure has opened to the PCs. They might become the defenders of Salimar, or they might venture deep into unknown lands, working with the downtrodden folk to defeat the brutal tyranny of the Iron Lords.

Other Adventures

The player characters have crash-landed on Jupiter, been captured at sea, were forced to fight in an arena for the pleasure of marikon spectators, and have been handed a mission to seek sanctuary among the veth. But a whole world awaits, and part of the fun of a planetary romance campaign is exploring the rich and unusual world upon which the Strangers have been stranded.

Consider some of the following story titles as inspiration for further adventures, and always try to keep your characters wondering about what new marvels might be found just beyond the horizon.

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BLEEARRGH! I'LL TEACH YOU TO TROUBLE ME WITH PETTY COMPLAINTS!
KYLE HUNTER'S
DOWNER
HELP ME, DOWNER AND I'LL DOUBLE YOUR PAY!
WHAT PART OF 'I QUIT' DID YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?
CHOOM
SPLORT
ZZZOT
YEEEEE
FSSSSST
HORF-HORF! STILL CONFIDENT YOU'LL TAKE ME, BOUNTY HUNTER?
UM, YEAH... SO I'M GOING TO CLEAN OUT MY DESK --
TO BE CONTINUED

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The first issue featuring the new flippy format combining *Dungeon* and *Polyhedron*. "Tears for Twilight Hollow" on the *Dungeon* side is the longest adventure printed in a while, and *Polyhedron* presents the "Pulp Heroes" d20 Mini-Game.

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Dungeon 91/Polyhedron 150

Challenge of Champions IV (any level)
The Rock and the Hard Place (16th)
Bogged Down (1st)
Sloth (6th)
The Legend of Garthulga (1st)
Kambranex's Machinations (9th)

This issue introduced the new half-machine template, the fourth module in the "Challenge of Champions" series, and the "Shadow Chasers" d20 Mini-Game in *Polyhedron*, a prequel to the *d20 Modern* roleplaying game.

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Dungeon 92/Polyhedron 151

Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai (13th)
The Swarm (1st)
Return of the Blessed Damozel (11th)
The Razing of Redshore (20th)

Polyhedron presents the return of Spelljammer, updated for the d20 System. In *Dungeon*, we print the first-ever 3rd Edition D&D 20th-level adventure, as well as a module using material from the *Stronghold Builder's Guide*.

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Dungeon 93/Polyhedron 152

Vanity (5th)
The Statue Gallery (9th)
Swamp Stomp (4th)
The Storm Lord's Keep (21st)

With the release of the *Epic Level Handbook*, *Dungeon* prints its first module for 21st-level characters. *Polyhedron* takes *d20 Modern*'s vehicle rules for a spin with "Thunderball Rally," a '70s driving game.

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Dungeon 94/Polyhedron 153

Bloodlines (7th)
The Last Hunt (4th)
The Excavation (3rd)
Worms in the Exchequery (15th)
Spiral of Manzessine (11th)

"Spiral of Manzessine" forms a bridge between the two sections of *City of the Spider Queen*, or it can be played independently. *Polyhedron* recruits Jonathan Tweet to revamp Gamma World for d20 with the "Omega World" Mini-Game.

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Dungeon 95/Polyhedron 154

The Jackal's Redemption (9th)
The Witch of Serpent's Bridge (3rd)
Lust (4th)
Porphyry House Horror (10th)

The most controversial issue of *Dungeon* ever features material from the *Book of Vile Darkness*. Intended for mature audiences, the module is bound in a special, sealed section. *Polyhedron* offers "Mecha Crusade." Who doesn't like giant fighting robots?

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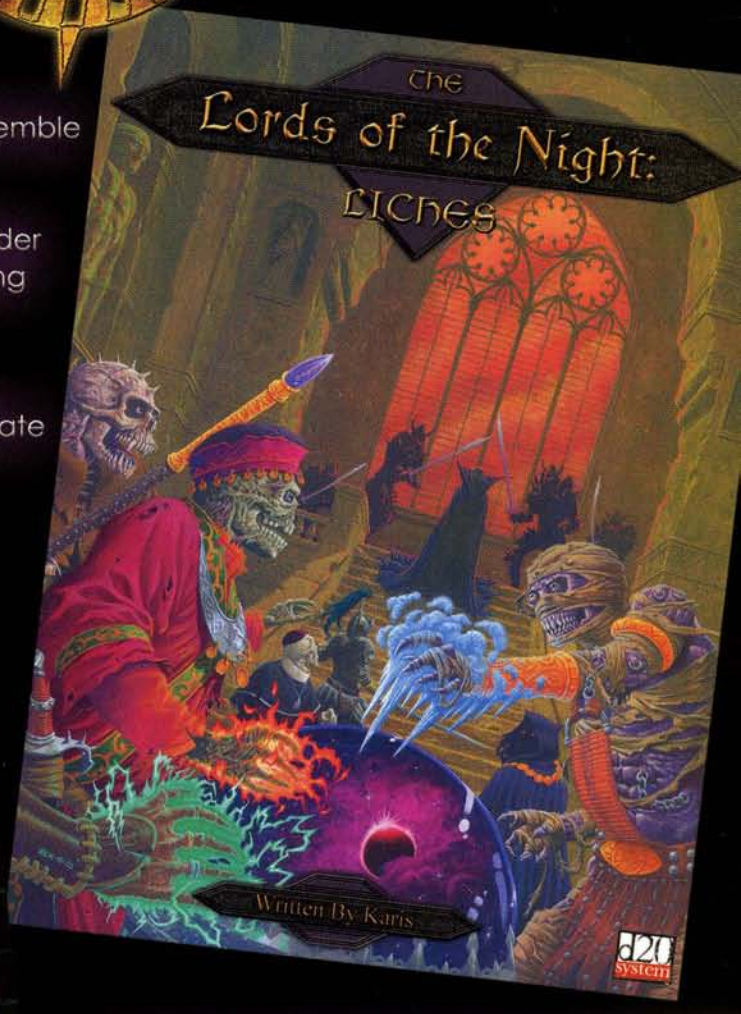

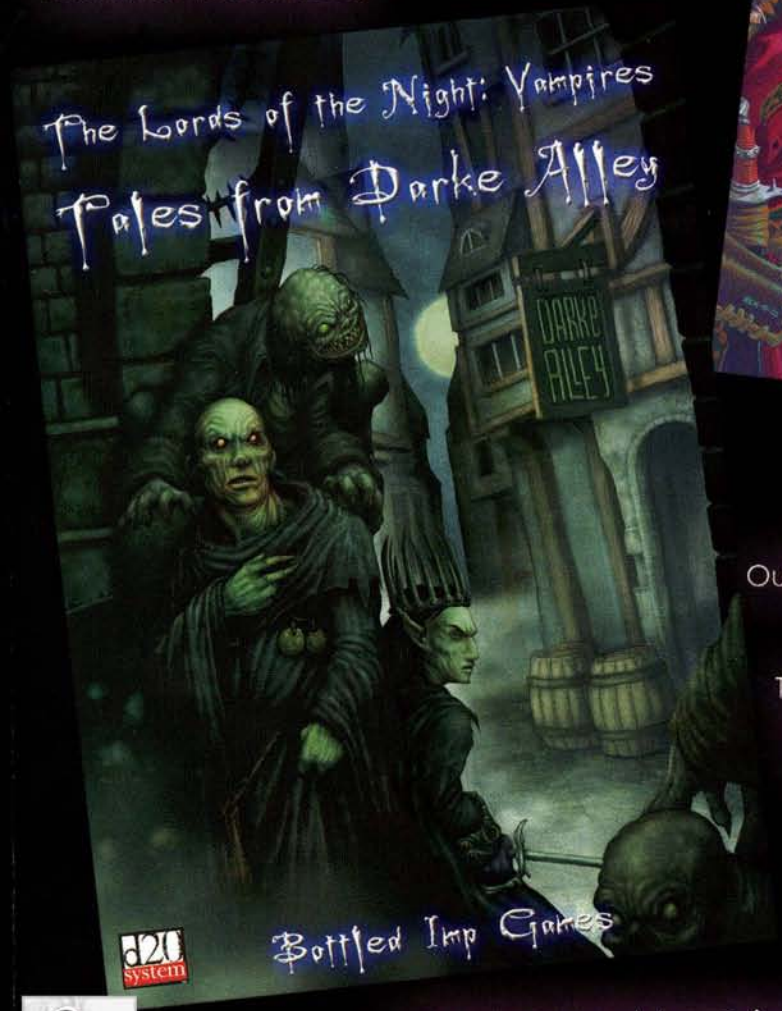

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